

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date and Time - **Monday 13 March 2023 – 6:30pm**

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

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.

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To authorise the Chair to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 January 2023 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. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ROTHER COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (Pages 3 - 16)

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

6. **PERFORMANCE REPORT: THIRD QUARTER 2022/23** (Pages 17 - 26)
7. **REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING AS AT QUARTER 3 - 2022/23** (Pages 27 - 36)
8. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFF-STREET CAR PARKS TASK AND FINISH GROUP** (Pages 37 - 50)
9. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING TASK AND FINISH GROUP** (Pages 51 - 76)
10. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BEXHILL TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA TASK AND FINISH GROUP** (Pages 77 - 94)
11. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ANTI-POVERTY TASK AND FINISH GROUP** (Pages 95 - 98)
12. **WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 99 - 100)

Malcolm Johnston
Chief Executive

Agenda Despatch Date: 3 March 2023

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Rother District Council

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 13 March 2023

Title: Annual report of the Rother Community Safety Partnership

Report of: Head of Service - Environmental Services, Licensing and Community Safety

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To provide an annual Report on the work of the Safer Rother Partnership to address issues of Anti-Social Behaviour, crime and Community Safety across Rother

Officer

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

- 1) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee make any recommendations arising from the report to the Chair of the Safer Rother Partnership for consideration;
- 2) the Council’s work in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour, crime reduction and Community Safety be noted; and
- 3) the possible impact of the Serious Violence Duty and Protect Duty be noted.

Introduction

1. The purpose of this annual report is to provide information on the work of the Rother Community Safety Partnership [known as the Safer Rother Partnership (SRP)] for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review, scrutinise and make reports or recommendations to the responsible authorities of the SRP in-line with the Council’s statutory responsibilities, under sections 19-21 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.
2. The report also includes information about the Council’s own responsibilities and actions related to community safety and anti-social behaviour (ASB).
3. The Community Safety Partnership’s (CSP) responsible authorities are; Rother District Council (RDC), Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS), East Sussex County Council (ESCC), Probation Service and NHS Sussex.
4. Councillor Brian Drayson is RDC’s nominated representative, Chair of the SRP, Co-Chair of the Joint Community Safety Partnership Board with Hastings and the Council’s representative on the Board of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Performance of the Safer Rother Partnership 2022/23

5. The joint Board meets quarterly to identify changes in crime and ASB of strategic significance to both areas, wider trends and review the work delivered against these priorities. The Board is co-chaired by Councillor Brian Drayson and his Hastings Borough Council counterpart.

6. During 2022/2023, the Safer Hastings and Rother Partnership Board priorities were:

Making the Streets and Businesses safer by tackling street related crime and ASB

Protecting Vulnerable People

- a) Not tolerating modern slavery and human trafficking
- b) Not condoning Violence Against Women and Girls

Identifying Those at Risk of Harm

- a) Ensuring those with substance misuse issues are supported
- b) Not condoning domestic abuse to all (White Ribbon).

7. **The Rother Joint Action Group (JAG)** (an officer operational group) meets monthly to oversee the delivery of the local priorities for Rother which in 2022/23 were:

- **ASB and Youth Crime** – by working in partnership to reduce the occurrence and impact of young people involved in crime and ASB and as victims.
- **Rural Crime**, including specific types of crime e.g. theft of farm and large plant machinery and cross border crime. Linking in with East Sussex priorities and cross border work with Wealden and Kent.
- **Drug Related Harm** including drug supply (both local and county lines) and the impact on the local community. Including partnership work with drug treatment and support agencies.

8. It was also agreed that work on Domestic Abuse and Road Safety would be included as a focus for work but not as specifically identified priorities.

9. The Rother JAG continues to support and deliver work to address issues that are business as usual through the work of partnership agencies and are priorities e.g. there are joint partnership meetings which Council officers facilitate, organise and participate in to deliver work on:

- Cuckooing
(multi-agency case management of 10 complex cases in Rother in last 12 months – 6 of which were in Bexhill)
- Domestic Abuse including the White Ribbon Campaign
- High and Medium Risk Anti-Social Behaviour and all Hate crime cases

(multi-agency case management of 22 High and Medium Risk cases in Rother of which 12 were in Bexhill)

- Modern Slavery – Operation Discovery
- Road Safety

- The Rother JAG also supports and delivers work to address issues that come about through the work of partnership agencies and are priorities e.g. Operation Radcott (Camber), Herbrand Walk, Serious and Organised Crime, Safeguarding, Multiple and Complex Needs, Civil Parking Enforcement, Fly Tipping, Criminal Damage, Fire setting.
- In 2022/23 and moving into 2023/24, the JAG and SRP partners are also working to address:
 - Business crime and shop thefts with Sussex Police.
 - The financial crisis, fuel poverty and warm spaces and the impact on crime and domestic abuse.
 - Young People’s Voice around White Ribbon and Positive relationships
 - New neighbourhood enforcement team in Bexhill
 - Violence Against Women and Girls the national agenda – local actions
 - Community tensions from migration and radicalisation.

The work plan for the JAG for 2022/23 is attached as Appendix D.

Crimes Reported

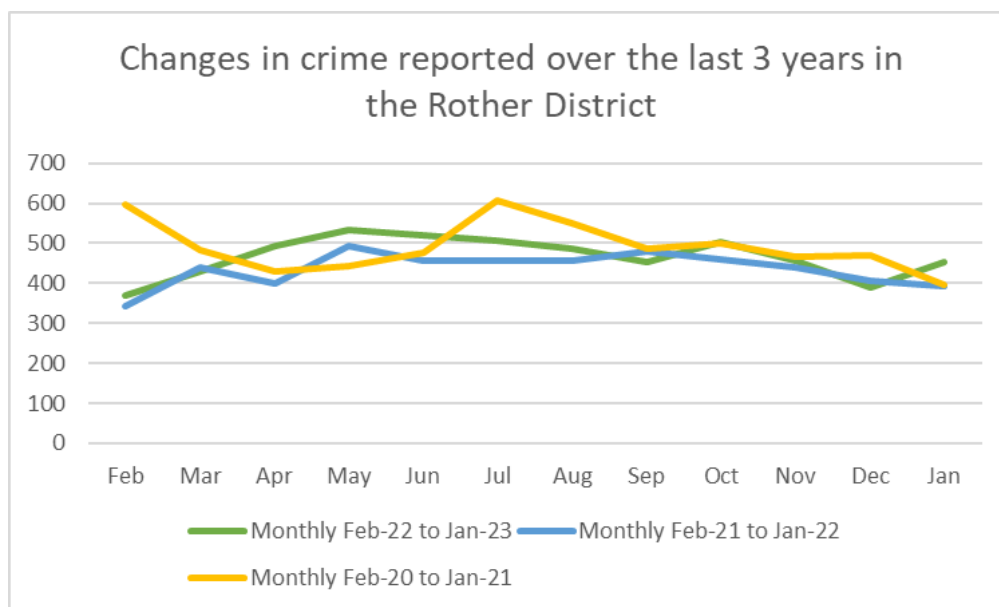
- The time frame used for most data presented in this report is 12 months rolling year ending 31 January 2023. The date may be compared to the previous rolling 12 months to the year ending 31 January 2022, or over several years which will be highlighted where relevant.
- There were 5,590 reported in Rother, reported to Sussex Police during the 12 months to the end of January 2023. Which is 363 more than the previous 12 months. This is a similar pattern across East Sussex and Sussex where all areas have seen an increase in reports.

Crime Data Rolling Year to end Jan 2023			
Total Crime Across East Sussex	% increase	Number of reports	Increase
Eastbourne	9.9	9,575	864
Hastings	4.6	9,900	432
Lewes	8.5	5,806	454
Rother	6.9	5,590	363
Wealden	11.2	6,594	663
East Sussex	8.0	37,456	2,766
Force	9.5	128,288	11,102

- Rother has the second lowest percentage increase in reports (6.9%) in East Sussex with Hastings having the lowest (4.6%) and Wealden the highest (11.2%). The highest increase 16.7% across Sussex was in Worthing an

additional 1,427 reports above that for the whole of West Sussex of 10.2% and Brighton and Hove an increase of 7.8%.

15. Over the last 5 years the level of crime reported to Sussex Police for Rother has remained fairly consistent considering COVID restrictions and guidance. The lowest rolling year was to end January 2019 (5,068) and highest rolling year to end of January 2020 (6,112); the figures for the year end January 2023 sit within this range. It is also important to recognise that this is the first year of data since all COVID restrictions and rules were lifted on 24 February 2022, hence the figures in this report for the year ending January 2023 may be considered as a new baseline.



16. Reports of criminal damage increased by 64 to 741 residential and vehicle increased by 29 each with business and community increasing by just five. Additional work has been undertaken by Police, the SRP and the Council's Neighbourhood Services officers to address spikes in damage to public conveniences including additional patrols and review of CCTV footage.

There were 261 reports of burglary, 108 to business and community and 153 to residences less than one per day.

Just over 200 reports of shoplifting to Sussex Police each year for the last two years, less than one per day.

There were 48 fewer drug offences reported of which the majority were for drug possession. There was an increase in reporting during COVID restrictions when less people were about and more people were at home.

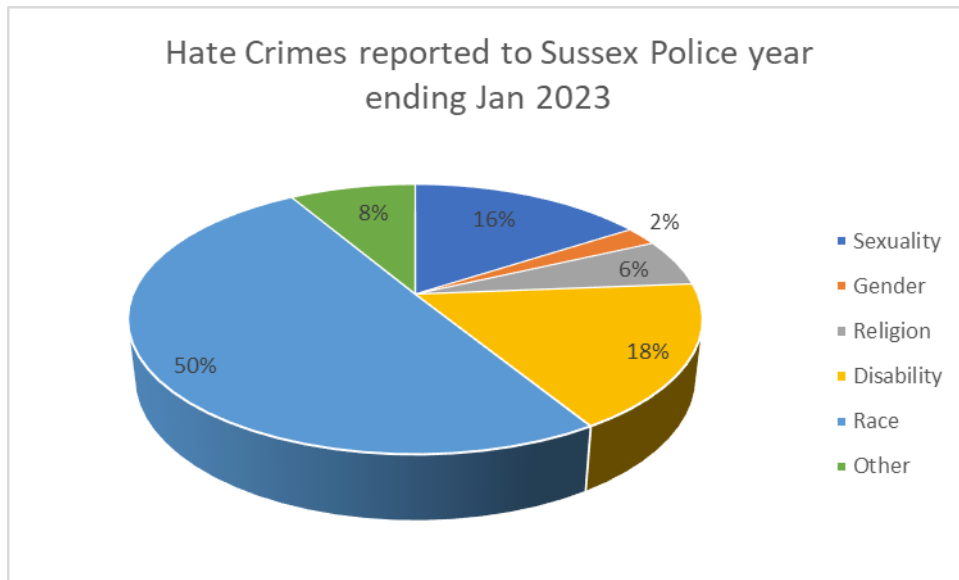
Violent Crime in a Public place has only risen by five (0.7%) reports to 710, which is the lowest in East Sussex with other areas seeing increases of between 8% and 14%.

There were five reports of Modern Slavery to Sussex Police. However, work is carried out by a by a multi-agency team to investigate Modern Slavery and

provide support to victims over and above reports made to the Police by the public.

- There are some crime types we would wish to see increases in reporting, as they demonstrate confidence in people feeling able to report and referrals can be made to support services e.g. Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime.

There were 162 Hate Crime reports and 20 Hate Crime Incidents reported to Sussex police in the year ending 31 January 2023, which equates to a 27.6% increase in crimes reported.



There were 934 reports of Domestic Violence Crime and 577 of Domestic Violence incidents to Sussex Police in the last 12 months.

- Agencies providing services and support to victims of domestic abuse report increases in cases of coercion and control and end of relationship violence and suicide. Higher risk cases are discussed at the Hastings and Rother Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). CGL support services who provide support for higher risk and more complex cases have seen a significant increase in the number of Rother cases in the latest 3 quarters of 206 referrals, which is more than a 24% increase on the same period the year before.

Rother	Quarter 1 April to June	Quarter 2 July - August	Quarter 3 Sept -Dec
Female	68	51	67
Male	10	6	4

Note: the 934 reports to Sussex Police will contain multiple reports about the same individuals and lower level cases will be offered support from a range of other agencies including victim support.

- Reports of anti-social behaviour to the Council, Police and housing providers continue to be managed by these agencies. Complex cases require significantly more work by the Council and all partners, often include safeguarding, mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse.

20. Rother continues to have excellent working relationships with the key agencies and resilient and resourceful staff and structures, e.g. the monthly multi-agency Hate and ASB and risk assessment group and case reviews, have enabled complex cases to continue to be dealt with effectively. We are seen as an example of good practice in the way we work in Rother and our use of ECINs (a secure cloud-based case management system funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner and managed by Sussex Police) across Sussex. This has not been the case across all Community Safety Partnerships. Rother is an active member of pan Sussex working groups for ASB and ECINS. Reductions in reporting are mirrored across East Sussex. There were the following ASB cases reported to police during for the year to the end of January 2023:
- ASB Personal – 97 (-116)
 - ASB Nuisance – 749 (-862)
 - ASB Environmental – 61 (-4)
21. Rother District has had 12 CCTV Cameras (Public Facing/Static) monitored by Sussex Police since before 2014. The Council has paid for transmission, maintenance and the electricity supply for these cameras as part of a partnership arrangement with Sussex Police, Local Authorities including some parish councils and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Repair or replacement has historically been funded through the SRP budget.
22. The expenditure for this CCTV has a separate Council Cost Centre. The existing CCTV System Agreement ran from 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2022. However, due to COVID, there have been delays in review of the agreement, recommissioning and negotiations. At present, Sussex Police are working with BT on an interim extension until 31st March 2023.
23. Public facing CCTV continues to serve our communities well. On average, it supports 70% of vulnerable people in the community not only for crime matters but supportive purposes too. Sussex Police provide specific operators who monitor all our cameras helping to address faults and liaising live time with front line resources to ensure the people of Sussex get the best resource. Further details can be found in Appendix C.
24. In 2022/23, the **SRP Funded a range of projects** to address priorities in Rother. Funding for the partnership projects comes from the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner £35,077.
- a) Airtime agreement for deployable CCTV cameras used by Sussex Police in Rother
 - b) Replacement Nomad camera for deployable cameras
 - c) Contribution to Domestic Homicide Reviews
 - d) Hire of Variable Messaging Sign for bonfire, Christmas lighting and the launch of the environmental enforcement scheme with NES
 - e) White Ribbon Film and Social Media Project
 - f) Time 2 Talk 2022 mediation for 8-18 year olds to improve family relationships
 - g) Security Marking Equipment to address rural crime
 - h) Community event to build trust and confidence in police and other agencies

Applications for a [Community Safety Grant](#) can be made to the Joint Action Group

25. Environmental offences

Since 22/08/22, NES Ltd officers have been authorised to issue fixed penalty notices for environmental offences. The income received from the concessionary agreement with NES Ltd was £18,000 (January 2023).

This was used to fund:

Graffiti removal	£3,000
Signs	£1,000
Waste removal	£3,000

FPNs served September 2022 to January 2023

Offence description	Number of FPNs served
Cigarette butts-litter	743
Rolled cigarettes-litter	148
Fly-tipping business origin	31
Fly-tipping domestic origin	23
Business duty of care-no waste contract	19
Other litter/ waste	12
Dog control	11

FPNs served by gender Female 41% Male 59%

26. Environmental Services and Licensing and Community Safety staff, the police and other agencies continue to carry out successful operational and education initiatives across Rother and Wealden to address e.g.:

- ASB, neighbour disputes and High and Medium risk cases are managed through the monthly Hate and ASB Case Review meeting.
- Community safety issues arising at beaches across Rother, including illegal immigration, protest groups, sleeping in vehicles, noise nuisance, ASB and specific summer operations in Camber and at Herbrand Walk.
- Crime, safety and risk for events managed with partner agencies through SAGs.
- Licensing and ASB issues in both public houses and businesses.
- Modern Slavery through project Discovery.
- Safeguarding of both adults and children through case reviews and multi-agency work and fulfil the Council's duty and responsibilities.

27. The Community Safety Team also work with other Council departments to both fulfil the Council's duty and responsibilities and cases and enquires from residents and Members, such as Housing (e.g. Domestic Abuse cases, Multi Agency Public Protection and other offenders, victims of Hate and ASB and Rough sleeping and Homelessness), Planning and Planning Enforcement (e.g. neighbour disputes, ASB and criminality), Customer Services (e.g. Safeguarding and assessment of need for callers to the Council).

28. The Safer Rother Partnership JAG agreed the priorities for 2023/24 at its March meeting and will be using an analytical product provided by the police to focus resources on those crimes and victims that have the highest risk or behaviours that have the biggest impact on the community of Rother. In addition, the JAG will also review:

- Crime and ASB data
- Consultation from the PSPO process
- Rother Reputation Tracker Survey Report which came from an ESCC survey of residents across East Sussex
- Priorities of the Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner
- Local and East Sussex Policing priorities.

29. **New Legislation and Duties 2022/23**

On 19 December 2022, the Government announced details for the Protect Duty, now to be known as 'Martyn's Law' in tribute of Martyn Hett, who was killed alongside 21 others in the Manchester Arena terrorist attack in 2017. The duty will place a requirement on those responsible buildings and venues that fit the criteria to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures.

30. The legislation will ensure parties are prepared, ready to respond and know what to do in the event of an attack. Better protection will be delivered through enhanced security systems, staff training, and clearer processes. The Protect Duty will require review of relevant premises across Rother. (See Appendix B)

31. Work is underway to fulfil the responsibilities of the Community Safety Partnership and the Council under the Serious Violence Duty. A summary of the duty is contained in Appendix A.

Community Safety

32. Under s17(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local authorities, amongst others, have a duty to exercise their functions with 'due regard' to the need to prevent crime and disorder in their area.

33. Within this work there are duties and roles for the Council and partners under other legislation, including that for anti-social behaviour, safeguarding adults and children, domestic abuse, licensing, modern slavery, domestic abuse and reflect the work of many Council departments e.g. Environmental Health and Licensing, Housing, Customer Services, Planning Enforcement, Neighbourhood Services.

34. "Crime and disorder scrutiny functions", in relation to a council, means functions that are, or, but would be, exercisable by the crime and disorder committee of the Council under sections 19, 20 and schedule 8 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

35. Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 makes changes to section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requiring Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence.

36. The report highlights the work of the SRP, and Council officers to prevent crime and disorder, reduce the impact of antisocial behaviour and crimes and mitigate the negative impact on the quality of life of residents, businesses, and visitors.

Environmental Implications

37. It is well documented that crime and anti-social behaviour have a negative impact on the quality of life and residents' perceptions of the area they live in. There are also environmental implications in connection to e.g. fly tipping, graffiti, misuse of land under planning regulations, drug supply, cultivation or manufacture and paraphernalia, derelict and dangerous buildings.

Equalities and Diversity

38. Given the nature of Crime and Disorder, anti-social behaviour and community safety, the work of the Council and partners reflects the need for consideration of vulnerabilities and protective characteristics in case management, reduction of crime and working with victims and offenders. The Council and partner agencies have specific safeguarding responsibilities and a significant investment is made by all parties to take a holistic approach and consider equality and diversity in all work and initiatives. The Council also participates fully in both local and East Sussex wide safeguarding work including complex cases, modern slavery, domestic homicide, ASB and hate crime casework and offender management.

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

Chief Executive	Malcolm Johnson
Report Contact Officer:	Carol Studley – Community Safety Coordinator
e-mail address:	carol.studley@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	A Summary of the Serious Violence Duty B Summary of the Protect Duty C CCTV locations D JAG work Plan 2022-23
Relevant previous Minutes:	OSC21/52
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None

Summary of the Serious Violence Duty

The guidance outlines changes to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requiring Community Safety Partnerships to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence. Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (PCSC Act).

For the purposes of this duty, violence includes violence against property and threats of violence, but does not include terrorism. However, there is flexibility in local areas to take account of their evidence-based strategic needs assessment and include in their strategy actions which focus on other related types of serious violence, this could include (but is not limited to) domestic violence, alcohol related violence, sexual abuse, modern slavery or gender-based violence.

Local Authorities duty commenced on the 31st January 2023. Local areas will have until 31 January 2024 to publish their local strategies based on serious violence issues within the local areas.

Police and Crime Commissioners are eligible to apply for funding to support with costs associated with delivering the Duty. Applications closed in early January 2023.

Protect Duty Summary

What does this mean for Publicly Accessible Locations?

Protect Duty, now to be known as 'Martyn's Law' will follow a tiered model linked to activity that takes place at a location and its capacity aimed to prevent undue burden on businesses. Such locations would include locations for purposes such as:

- entertainment and leisure;
- retail, food and drink;
- museums and galleries;
- sports grounds,;
- public areas of local and central Government buildings (e.g., town halls);
- visitor attractions;
- temporary events; and
- Places of Worship, health and education.

A **standard tier** will apply to locations with a maximum capacity of over 100. They will be required to include training, information sharing and completion of a preparedness plan to embed practices, such as locking doors to delay attackers' progress or knowledge on lifesaving treatments that can be administered by staff whilst awaiting emergency services.

An **enhanced tier** will focus on high-capacity locations in recognition of the potential consequences of a successful attack. Locations with a capacity of over 800 people at any time, will additionally be required to undertake a risk assessment to inform the development and implementation of a security plan to assess the balance of risk reduction against the time, money and effort required to achieve a successful level of security preparedness - a recognised standard in other regulatory regimes (including Fire and Health and Safety).

The Government will establish an inspection and enforcement regime, promoting compliance and positive cultural change and issuing credible and fair sanctions for serious breaches.

Dedicated statutory guidance and bespoke support will be provided by the Government to ensure those in scope can effectively discharge their responsibilities, with even small venues also able to benefit from this and take voluntary action. Expert advice, training and guidance is also already available on the online protective security hub, ProtectUK.

Public Facing CCTV Locations and provision

Location	
Cantelupe Road/Sea Road	Bexhill
Channel View Road West	Bexhill
Devonshire Square	Bexhill
Sackville Road	Bexhill
Town Hall Square	Bexhill
Ravenside Retail Park	A259
Brett Drive	Bexhill
Ninfield Road	Sidley
Ninfield Road/Smith and Humphreys	Sidley
Chequers Public House Roundabout A2100, and Marley Lane	Battle
COSTA Coffee (previously 1066 Public House) near the square	Battle
Fire Station roundabout A2100 and A271	Battle

In previous years the SRP has also purchased cameras for Council owned properties, community groups and re-deployable cameras for police operations. All of which assist in the reduction and detection of crime and ASB.

JAG Work Programme 2022-23		
Date of Meeting	Subject – (Part A) Main Item in Bold	Chair
8 March 2022 (10:30-12:30)	Update on priorities - Drug Related Harm Bids for funding VMS system Update on budget for 2022-23 Letter about profile of the Partnership	Carol Studley
5 April 2022 (14:30-16:30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget setting 2022-23 • Update on White Ribbon Campaign 2022 • VMS System 	Dan Channon
10 May 2022 (10:30-12:30)	Update on priorities – Rural Crime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the use of JAG funding and outcomes achieved. • Update of Summer interventions and priorities e.g. Op Radcott, Herbrand Walk 	Cathy Gregory
14 June 2022 (10:30-12:30)	Update on priorities - ASB and Youth Crime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Parking areas of concern – Grant Virgo/All • Commissioning of projects & use of JAG fund. 	Carol Studley
12 July 2022 (14:30-16:30)	Update on priorities - Drug Related Harm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from OPCC meetings (Road Safety 30 June 2022). • Report from SHARP Road Safety Group to the JAG. 	Richard Parker-Harding
6 Sept 2022 (14:30-16:30)	Modern Slavery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial feedback on Op Radcott, Herbrand Walk and Summer season 	Insp Olivia Carroll
11 October 2022 (10:30-12:30)	Cuckooing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Civil Parking Enforcement and the benefits compared to previous year. 	Carol Studley
8 November 2022 (10:30-12:30)	Violence Against Women and Girls in Rother <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Ribbon Campaign 2022 • Emerging issues and interventions for Christmas and New Year 	Carol Studley
13 December 2022 (10:30-12:30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of JAG funding and commissioning of bids as required. • Spotlight Review of 2022 • Emerging issues for 2023 • How JAG can help address shop theft and taxi safety issues. 	Susan Taylor
10 January 2023 (10:30-12:30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider how to overlap data to prioritise areas/issues (including hot spot mapping) • Data sets and analytical products required for 2023 • Emerging issues for 2023 	Vanessa Biddiss

Work Programme 2022-23

Date of Meeting	Subject – (Part A) Main Item in Bold	Chair
7 February 2023 (14:30-16:30)	Priority Setting for 2023-4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul Saunders to present 'Speak Out' Hastings and Rother films and share links. Review of 2022 work and achievements Priority setting – initial discussions prior to SHARP Board 	Olivia Carroll
14 March 2023 (10:30-12:30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of funded projects and outcomes achieved. Report from SHARP Road Safety Group Finalise priorities for 2023/24 	TBC

Items for Consideration

- Commissioning of projects 2022-23
- Communications strategy
- Domestic Abuse reporting in Rother compared to Wealden – good practice and information
- Report from SHARP Road Safety Group to the JAG
- Violence Against Women and Girls in Rother
- Update on Civil Parking Enforcement and the benefits compared to previous years

Priorities for the year 2022-23

Agreed at the JAG meeting 8 February 2022

ASB and Youth Crime – by working in partnership to reduce the occurrence and impact of young people involved in crime and ASB and as victims.

Rural Crime, including specific types of crime e.g. theft of farm and large plant machinery and cross border crime. Linking in with East Sussex priorities and cross border work with Wealden and Kent.

Drug Related Harm including drug supply (both local and county lines) and the impact on the local community. Including partnership work with drug treatment and support agencies

It was also agreed that work on **Domestic Abuse** and **Road Safety** would be included as a focus for work but not as specifically identified priorities.

Rother District Council

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	13 March 2023
Title:	Performance Report: Third Quarter 2022/23
Report of:	Director - Place and Climate Change
Ward(s):	N/A
Purpose of Report:	To monitor the delivery of the Council's Key Performance Indicators
Officer	
Recommendation(s):	It be RESOLVED : That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider these findings and recommend any actions to Cabinet, as necessary.

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). It should be noted that the committee chose a new set of indicators for 2023/24 at the [January 2023](#) meeting and the new set will be reported in the new financial year.
- 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 third financial quarter (1 October 2022 to 31 December 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.

4. 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. **Households in Temporary Accommodation (TA)** - The Council is limited in its ability to affect the various factors that increase homelessness and the number of households in TA. It continues to be recommended that the Council focus on its homelessness prevention measure as the key indicator of performance for the Housing Service (see below). The current number of households in TA is 133 of which 13 are discretionary placements that are made for rough sleepers.
6. The number of TA placements overall is significant compared to the same time last year where there were approximately 90 placements. The increase correlates with an overall increase in homelessness presentations. 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. We continue to execute a plan to reduce discretionary placements for rough sleepers in a managed and measured way, utilising the county-wide Rough Sleeping Initiative and locally commissioned services to ensure rough sleeper numbers are minimised.
7. **Average unit cost of TA** – The average unit cost for Quarter 3 is £1,082, down from £1,130 in Quarter 2 and against a target of £1,201. We continue to monitor 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.
8. **Homelessness prevented or relieved** - The performance in Quarter 3 2022/23 was 31 preventions and reliefs, which is an increase on Quarter 2 and an increase of 20% on the average number 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.
9. **Number on the Housing Register** - The number on the housing register is 2,095. The number 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.
10. **Affordable homes built** - At end of Quarter 3 there were a total of 16 completions across 3 different housing schemes. 15 of these completions have been for affordable rent and 1 for shared ownership. This means that so far in 2022/23 we have had 80 completions and we are still on track to meet our overall supply target for the year of 106 units.

Finance Performance

11. There are no changes to the income from assets to report this quarter. However, there is an increase in additional income generation from £55k to £93,856. This includes the previously reported income from renting the second floor of Amherst Road and the new fairground attraction. The additional income is from third party works by the maintenance team and the re-charging of our staff's time to the housing company.
12. The Council Tax collection rate was at 84.13% at the end of December compared to 84.54% for the same period last year.
13. The Business Rates collection rate was at 84.57% at the end of December compared to 77.72% for the same period last year

Economic Development and Poverty Summary

14. The number of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme claimants has not significantly changed from the Q2 numbers. In total there are 6,540 CTR claimants made up of 2,813 pensioner households (43%) and 3,727 working age households (57%). Numbers are closely monitored to try and identify any significant changes as soon as possible.
15. The Council Tax collection rate was at 84.13% at the end of December compared to 84.54% 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.
16. The Business Rates collection rate was at 84.57% at the end of December compared to 77.72% 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

17. 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. 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.
18. The recycling rate is measured by the tonnage collected of co-mingled recyclable material versus total refuse and is translated into a percentage.
19. We currently have 20,641 garden waste subscribers. Their garden waste tonnages are included in the recycling tonnages, and so very much contributes to the overall re-use, recycling and composting percentage of collected household waste, because garden waste weighs more than dry recycling.

20. 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.
21. 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 closure of these sites has continued in the third quarter with Peasmarsch and Burwash recently closing. 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.
22. 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.
23. As we have reported previously, during COVID the general household waste tonnages increased as people shopped and worked from home. Pre-COVID (2019-2020) rates rose 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 rise is largely due to the increase in garden waste subscribers. The amount of dry recycling tonnages has remained static throughout the period.
24. The focus is to work both on improving the quality of the recycling material collected and the amount of recycling material collected.
25. 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. For the second quarter July 2022 to September 2022, the recycling percentage is 45% compared with 50.9% for the same quarter 2021/2022. The garden waste tonnages were significantly down in the second quarter 2022 due to the drought and this had a negative impact on the overall recycling rate. Once again, this emphasises the role that garden waste plays in our overall results.
26. 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.
27. 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.

28. The above actions all make significant contributions towards the quality of recycling. But they 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.
29. Going forward, as we reported in the second quarter, the waste industry still waits 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 an 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.
30. In the quarter two report, it was proposed to the Committee to adopt two measurements for the Council's own CO2 emissions and for the whole district using the data from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. There are no new figures for measuring CO2 for the work of the Council and for the whole district. Data is provided annually. The next update of those figures will be presented to this Committee through the Climate Change Steering Group in the autumn. The targets will be part of the revised Environment Strategy and its action plan that will go through Committee and Council approval in early 2024.

Planning Processing Summary

31. The returns continue to show a continued downward trend in the average number of days processing major development 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.
32. From October to December inclusive, again a downward trend in the average number of days to process both Major and Non-Major applications is demonstrated. Processing time for major applications has fallen from around 35 weeks in the first quarter to around 17 weeks in the third quarter. Processing time for minor applications has fallen from around 27 weeks to around 17 weeks. It is considered that, with reduced applications on hand, removed validation backlogs and controlled application backlogs, the figures should see further albeit slowed improvement.

33. 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 reducing the need to seek time extensions.

Conclusion

34. This report sets our performance against the agreed key performance indicators for the five themes for the third quarter of 2022/23.
35. 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
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Appendices:	A – Summary KPI Table B – KPI Definitions
Relevant previous Minutes:	CB21/7, OSC22/35, OSC22/49
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.

Housing & Communities	Status	Target	Q1 Result	Q2 Result	Q3 Result	Compared to previous quarter (Q2)	Compared to Q3 2021/22
Number of all households in temporary accommodation		60	129	136	133		
Number of households on the housing register		1,200	2021	2068	2,095		
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (supply target: end of year)		106	43	21	Q3: 16 YTD: 80		
Homelessness Prevented and Homelessness Relieved (new KPI)		No target	Prvt: 15 Relv: 14	Prvt: 16 Relv: 14	Prvt: 16 Relv: 15		(New)
Cost of temporary accommodation (new for 2022/23)		£1,201	£999	£1,130	£1,082		
Finance Performance							
Net income from all investment assets		£1,850,000	£2,566,126	£2,566,126	£2,566,126		
Additional income generation		£107,000	£54,200	£55,200	£93,846		
Economic Development and Poverty							
Number of Council Tax reduction claimants: Total, Pensioners and Working Age		T: 6,960 P: 3,041 W: 3,919	T: 6,556 P: 2,905 W: 3,651	T: 6,548 P: 2,853 W: 3,696	T: 6,452 P: 2818 W: 3,634		
Council Tax collection rates (income received as a % of collectable debit)		98.3%	29.81%	57.13%	81.13%		

Housing & Communities	Status	Target	Q1 Result	Q2 Result	Q3 Result	Compared to previous quarter (Q2)	Compared to Q3 2021/22
Business Rates collection rates (income received as a % of collectable debit)		98%	29.71%	59.17%	84.57%		
Waste Collection							
ESCC Waste re-used, composted and recycled (reported one quarter in arrears)		54%	52.58%	47.7%			
Carbon baseline (new for 2022/23) a) Rother District Council tCO2 b) Rother district CO2 Kt		Pending revised strategy			Reported annually		
Planning Processing							
Major applications: weeks to process or calendar days to process		13 weeks 91 days	34 wks, 2 days or 240 days	26 wks, 4 days or 186 days	17 wks & 6d: or 125 days		
Minor applications: days to process		8 weeks 56 days	26 wks, 4 days 186 days	19 wks, 4 days 137 days	16 wks & 5d: or 117 days		

Key:

- Performance on target or better than target
- Performance not on target and getting worse
- Performance not on target but improving towards target
- Direction of travel better than previous quarter
- Direction of travel worse than previous quarter
- Direction of travel no change from the previous quarter
- Direction of travel better than the same quarter last year
- Direction of travel worse than the same quarter last year
- Direction of travel the same as the same quarter last year

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 TA have been living in TA.

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

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	13 March 2023
Title:	Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring as at Quarter 3 - 2022/23
Report of:	Duncan Ellis - Interim Chief Finance Officer
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To note the estimated financial out turn for 2022/23 based on expenditure and income to the end of Quarter 3, 31 December 2022.
Officer	
Recommendation(s):	It be RESOLVED : That the report be noted.

Introduction

1. This report updates Members on the Council's financial position as at the 31 December 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 31 December 2022 indicates a surplus of £0.133m against the approved budgeted drawdown from Reserves of £3.187m which would reduce the reserve drawdown to £3.054m at the year end. The position is summarised in Appendix A and the main variances are explained in paragraphs 3 to 13.

Corporate Core – Deficit £54,000

3. There has been a £40,000 forecast deficit increase from the 2nd Quarter. This is mainly due to the Facilities Management pay award for lower paid staff. There were also additional costs of £10,000 incurred from the overlap between the start of newly outsourced Emergency Planning function with the savings on gained on staff cost.

Environmental Services – Surplus £9,000

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

Strategy and Planning – Deficit £164,000

5. The forecast deficit has increased by £66,000 since Quarter 2. Costs have increased principally through the procurement of additional staffing resources

for planning, development and enforcement of £138,000 as well as additional costs in relation to ecological works and business support. This is offset by increased forecast income from planning applications of £79,000. The potential cost of a recently submitted planning appeal for £124,000 has not been included in the forecast. This is because it may be unsuccessful and unlikely to be resolved until the new financial year.

Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration – Surplus £502,000

6. The forecast shows a reduced surplus of £60,000 since Quarter 2. This is mainly due to additional staffing costs in Economic Development and Environmental Strategy and additional costs of works for the refurbishment of the Amherst Road building due to the relocation of staff. This will be offset against savings made through the isolation and shutting down of the 'Villas' part of the Town Hall.

Housing and Community Services – Deficit £248,000

7. The forecast deficit has increased by £162,000 since Quarter 2. This is mainly due to a £100,000 increase in Temporary Accommodation (TA) costs and £20,000 extra cost for leased vehicles for beach services. There was also a reduction in forecast garden waste income and increase in water charges for public conveniences. The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) in conjunction with Strategic Leadership Team is working to look at ways to keep TA costs down.

Resources – Deficit £797,000

8. The deficit has increased by £214,000 since Quarter 2. This has been mainly due to additional capacity recruited into the finance department of £150,000 to cover vacant posts and provide technical advice with regards to major capital projects.

Net Financing Costs – Surplus £1,127,000

9. The surplus has decreased by £30,000 since the last forecast in Quarter 2 due to a minor adjustment to the financing costs forecast.

Financial Stability Programme (FSP) – Deficit £531,000

10. There has been little change since the Quarter 2 forecast with an increased deficit of £29,000. This is due to a review of existing agreed savings.
11. There has been a positive outcome from the discussions with Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council to devolve the running and maintenance of the 14 public conveniences in the town. This is an important milestone in the protection of discretionary services for Rother residents and it marks the first phase of the wider devolution programme. Savings from 1 April 2023 are expected to be in the region of £147,000 for running costs alone.
12. Engagement is also underway for phase two of devolution (implementation from 1 April 2024) to protect discretionary services across Rother including the devolvement of other assets/services in Bexhill. Initial meetings have also been held with Rye and Battle Town Councils and engagement will start with all other

affected parishes concerning public conveniences, maintenance of open spaces, non-charged for car parks and bus shelters.

Income – Surplus £89,000

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

Capital Programme

14. The CFO 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 may have a significant impact on the affordability of some capital schemes because borrowing costs are charged to the Revenue Budget.
15. Appendix B shows the original budget approved by Cabinet on the 22 February 2022, totalling £85.0m. Slippage from prior years accounts and in-year adjustments add a further £51.7m. This gives a revised in-year capital budget of £136.7m. The actual figures represent the expenditure to December 2022 of £17.2m.
16. Other schemes – there have been no significant change from the Quarter 2 report.
17. There is a requirement for capital works to prevent further water ingress at the Colonnade and there is also the need to address the non-functioning Bexhill Seafront Fountains. Neither of these projects are currently in the Capital Programme but will be reviewed as part of the wider intervention at the De La Warr Pavilion, to be discussed at a later agenda item.
18. Property Investment Strategy (PIS) – To improve clarity, some projects' titles within this section have been updated to better reflect their activity. The changes are noted in Appendix B. All projects will continue to be reviewed for affordability and reported to the Property Investment Panel. The Beeching Road Hotel and Food store Development is in the initial stages with the commercial parties and is likely to progress further in the next financial year subject to the affordability review. The Barnhorn Green GP Surgery and Industrial development is progressing well, planning permission was submitted in December and an updated scheme viability will be evaluated in this quarter. The major projects continue to be reviewed for financial viability for the Council.
19. Housing Development Schemes – The Blackfriars Housing Development road scheme is progressing to a revised plan. This ensures that all statutory environmental aspects are fully delivered in the appropriate seasonal windows and the challenging infrastructure designs meet all statutory requirements for flood prevention, utilities and highway adoption. King Offa site has secured Brownfield Land Release Funding and capital funding which will be spent in due course.
20. Housing and Community Services – The Disabled Facilities Grant is being spent and the forecast is underspent by £1.074m. The Temporary Accommodation Purchase budget is being spent as suitable properties become available.

Impact on Reserves

21. The forecast impact on Reserves is a drawdown of £3.172m, which is lower than the planned use of £3.561m by £0.389m. This is shown in Appendix C.

Collection Fund

22. The collection rate at the 30 November 2022 for the Council Tax part of the Collection Fund was 75.55% of the collectable debit, which is 0.16% lower than the corresponding figure in 2021/22. The budgeted yield is 77.32%, which is 0.73% lower than the same period in 2021/22. Collection performance is shown below:

	Equivalent Period	
	2022/2023	2021/2022
Income Received	£86,485,076.18	£82,208,044.47
Income Received as a % of collectable debit	75.55%	75.71%
Budgeted yield (at 98.3% collection)	£84,513,438.24	£79,751,694.59
Income Received as a % of budgeted yield	77.32%	78.05%

23. The collection rate at the 30 November 2022 for the Business Rates part of the Collection Fund was 77.69 of the collectable debit, which is 12.413 higher than the corresponding figure in 2021/22. Collection performance is shown below:

	Equivalent Period	
	2022/2023	2021/2022
Collectable debit	£17,546,731.31	£14,723,049.10
Income Received	£13,631,796.05	£9,651,781.54
Income Received as a % of collectable debit	77.69%	65.56%
Amount outstanding for year	£3,914,935.26	£5,071,267.56

24. Collection rates continue to hold up well but of the slightly lower collection rate on council tax may be a sign that the cost of living crisis is starting to bite. However, Members will note that the target collection rate is 98.3% and last year the actual collection rate was 100.98%, although this included the recovery of arrears accrued during the pandemic. The Business Rates collection rate comparison to 2021/22 continues to be skewed by the level of reliefs given to ratepayers in order to offset the economic impact of lockdown but remain close to pre-lockdown levels. The forthcoming months will continue to provide a clearer picture of the impact that the current economic crisis may have on Council Tax and Business Rates income.

Conclusion

25. The revenue forecast for Quarter 3 2022/23 is a deficit of £3.054m, which is £133,000 lower than the approved planned use of Reserves. The CFO will continue to work closely with Heads of Services and Members to reduce areas of overspend and its impact on reserves.
26. The Council's Capital Programme is forecast to underspend (slippage) by £114.7m against the revised budget. Slippage relating to schemes in 2022/23

will be reviewed by the CFO 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

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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 3 Variance £ (000)	Change from Previous Quarter £ (000)
1	Executive Directors & Corporate Core	1,938	2,173	2,227	54	40
2	Environmental Services	451	629	620	(9)	(8)
3	Strategy and Planning	1,506	1,325	1,489	164	66
4	Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration	(384)	(12)	(514)	(502)	60
5	Housing and Community Services	8,116	8,212	8,460	248	162
6	Resources	3,580	3,302	4,099	797	214
7	Total Cost of Services	15,207	15,629	16,381	752	534
8	Net Financing Costs	281	1,543	416	(1,127)	0
9	Budget Contingency	0	200	0	(200)	0
10	Financial Stability Programme	(196)	(635)	(104)	531	29
11	Net Cost of Services	15,292	16,737	16,693	(44)	563
	Income					
12	Special Expenses	(692)	(702)	(702)	0	0
13	Net Business Rates and S31 Grants	(3,745)	(3,747)	(3,747)	0	0
14	Non-Specific Revenue Grants	(2,436)	(1,650)	(1,739)	(89)	0
15	Council Tax Requirement (Rother only)	(7,097)	(7,392)	(7,392)	0	0
	Other financing					
16	Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	120	(59)	(59)	0	0
17	Contributions to/(from)Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
18	Total Income	(13,850)	(13,550)	(13,639)	(89)	0
19	Contribution from Reserves/Funding Gap	1,442	3,187	3,054	(133)	563

Capital Programme 2022/23 Forecast as at the December 2022

	2022/23 Original Budget	2022/23 Revised Budget	2022/23 Actual to Month 12	2022/23 Total Forecast Spend in Quarter 4	2022/23 Variance (Slippage)
	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration					
Other Schemes					
Corporate Document Image Processing System	399	105	0	0	105
Rother Transformation ICT Investment	153	304	36	0	268
Community Grants	130	143	92	32	19
Cemetery Entrance	83	1	4	0	(3)
Development of Town Hall Bexhill	15	172	427	40	(295)
Ravenside Roundabout	200	200	0	0	200
CIL Scheme 1 Village Hall Energy Project	0	500	0	0	500
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	0	108	0	9	99
Property Investment (PI)					
Beeching Road Hotel and Food store Development	2,590	15,000	0	250	14,750
PIS - Beeching Park Estate	0	450	0	450	0
PIS - Beeching Road 18-40 (Creative Workspace)	29	187	170	17	(0)
Barnhorn Green GP Surgery and Industrial Development	6,099	6,099	296	50	5,754
Mount View - NHS Mental Health Hospital	0	14	0	0	14
PIS - Buckhurst Place	0	10,500	10,182	0	318
Housing Development Schemes					
Community Led Housing Scheme - CHF	0	1,348	297	0	1,051
Blackfriars Housing Development - infrastructure only	7,450	5,143	2,565	600	1,978
RDC Housing Company Limited funding	0	79,923	0	2,420	77,503
RDC Housing Company share investment	60,492	300	0	300	0
Development of council owned sites	0	213	21	0	192
King Offa Residential scheme	0	703	31	157	515
Mount View Street Development - Housing	0	3,400	0	0	3,400
Camber, Old Lydd Road	0	0	0	0	0
Housing and Community Services					
De La Warr Pavilion - Capital Grant	55	58	43	14	0
Land Swap re Former High School Site	900	1,085	0	0	1,085
Bexhill Leisure Centre - site development	189	189	0	0	189
Fairlight Coastal Protection	0	229	10	10	209
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,625	1,903	818	11	1,074
Sidley Sports and Recreation	101	297	194	2	101
New bins	125	149	77	77	(5)
Improvements to Northiam Recreation Ground s106	0	0	0	6	(6)
Bexhill Promenade - Protective Barriers	0	2	0	1	1
Housing - Temporary Accommodation Purchase	4,000	6,743	1,726	321	4,696
Bexhill Promenade - Shelter 1	55	55	33	22	0
Bexhill Promenade - Outflow pipe	80	191	0	19	172
Bexhill Leisure Centre - refurbishment	90	140	69	72	(1)
Capital - Northiam Cemetery Extension – S106	0	0	50	0	(50)
Strategy & Planning					
Payments to Parishes - CIL	48	96	0	0	96
Resources					
ICT Infrastructure Replacement Programme	0	12	0	0	12
New website development	14	12	3	0	9
Invest To Save initiatives (Financial Stability Prog)	0	721	16	0	705
Total Capital Programme	85,088	136,695	17,159	4,880	114,656

	2022/23 Original Budget	2022/23 Revised Budget	2022/23 Actual to Month 12	2022/23 Total Forecast	2022/23 Variance (Slippage)
	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)
Funded By:					
Capital Receipts	900	1,085	50	0	1,035
Grants and contributions	9,371	10,736	4,901	806	5,028
CIL	48	596	0	0	596
Borrowing	13,603	43,611	12,003	1,236	30,371
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	674	445	204	118	123
Borrowing and Loan for Rother DC Housing Company Ltd	60,492	80,223	0	2,720	77,503
Total Funding	85,088	136,695	17,159	4,880	114,656

Reserves

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 3 Variance £ (000)	Change in Previous Months £ (000)
1	Revenue Reserves and General Fund - Opening Balance	(13,209)	(11,088)	(11,088)	0	0
1a	Use of Reserves to Fund Capital Expenditure	678	374	118	(256)	
2	Use of Reserves to Balance Budget Deficit	1,444	3,187	3,054	(133)	
2a	Balance 31st March	(11,087)	(7,527)	(7,916)	(389)	0

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Rother District Council

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 13 March 2023

Title: Recommendations of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group

Report of: Head of Service Neighbourhood Services

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To summarise the work of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group since the last report in January 2022 and outline the Group's Final Recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Officer

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

- 1) the formal response to East Sussex County Council, attached at Appendix A to the report, regarding the proposed changes to Civil Parking Enforcement across the district following their annual 'informal' consultation, be approved;
- 2) increased directional signage for the De La Warr Pavilion car park to Wainwright Road car park and Gibbet Marsh, Rye and Lower Market Battle car parks be pursued and installed in liaison with East Sussex County Council as appropriate;
- 3) officers investigate the issue of shared Houses of Multiple Occupation and whether there is anything that can be done to increase the number of parking permits permissible in these circumstances;

AND

It be **RESOLVED**: That:

- 4) the outcome of the East Sussex County Council Parking Review and implementation date be confirmed to all Members as soon as possible; and
- 5) the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group be disbanded as the Terms of Reference have been met.

Introduction

1. This report summarises the work of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group (OSCPT&FG) since previously reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 24 January 2022 (Minute OSC21/45 refers).

Background

2. Since the introduction of CPE in October 2020, the OSCPT&FG, which was established in October 2020, has reported twice to OSC (26 April 2021 and 24 January 2022) regarding the impact of CPE on the level of use of Council owned off-street car parks, and recommended changes to charges, hours of operation and permits, whilst taking into account the need to generate sufficient revenue to maintain the car parks. Various changes were recommended to Cabinet and agreed (Minute CB21/06 and CB21/91 refer).
3. The OSCPT&FG, which was initially established for six months and then extended to 12 months to take into account the changing use in car parks across both the summer and winter seasons, was also asked to provide a formal written response on behalf of the Council to be considered as part of ESCC's first annual review of CPE, which closed on 30 September 2021. Members also submitted individual responses to the review and, through the use of MyAlerts and social media, residents were encouraged to do likewise. ESCC reported that a total of nearly 1000 responses were received compared to a usual level of response expected of c300.
4. At their meeting of 24 January 2022, OSC agreed that the OSCPT&FG's original Terms of Reference had been met, but that the Terms of Reference be amended to allow OSCPT&FG to be reconvened at a later date to review usage of Manor Gardens car park and ESCC's response to the CPE annual review. This was subsequently agreed by Cabinet on 28 Feb 2022
5. Since February 2022, offices have met monthly on an informal basis with the Chair of the OSCPT&FG to review progress, and then with the OSCPT&FG on 26 September 2022.

Review of Manor Gardens car park

6. The group reviewed Manor Gardens car park data and general update on revenue collected since the payment machine was installed in November 2021. Prior to the machine's installation, visitors were able to pay at site using RingGo or by walking to the nearby convenience store to use cash or card. The new payment machine enables users of the car park to pay on site by contactless, card or cash in addition to the RingGo App.
7. Income from customers paying to park from October 2020 to August 2022 inclusive was £41,908.
 - Income from permit sales during the same period was £8,113.
 - Income from fines to date is £860.
8. It was agreed that the payment machine has improved service and will prove a popular method of payment.
9. A moratorium remains in place for school 'drop offs' and 'pick ups' and local Doctors' surgery flu clinics.
10. It was agreed that further encouragement would be given to residents and the locally employed to apply for parking permits, including the Doctors' Surgery.

The Council has a duty to its council tax payers to ensure that assets pay for themselves and that users of services pay for them.

Assessment of ESCC's proposed changes to CPE first annual review

11. Rother District Council wrote to ESCC CPE Team on 1 March 2022 in response to ESCC's on-street CPE first year public consultation. The letter set out the OSCPT&FG's observations on the first year's parking restrictions for ESCC's consideration as part of the annual review as shown in the letter attached at Appendix B.
12. The letter concluded that CPE was felt to have been well received in the town centres and feedback from the Police was positive. It was noted anecdotally that reduced levels of town centre congestion and parking issues were evident, with improved availability of short-term parking on central urban streets due to restricted waiting times. On-street tariffs were felt to be fair and reasonable.
13. Following the public consultation process above and having considered members of the public and Councillors' submissions, ESCC completed an informal public consultation (which ran from 22 July 2022 until 12 August 2022) on their proposed changes to the existing parking restrictions and the introduction of additional measures, such as double yellow lines where appropriate.
14. Members of the OSCPT&FG were encouraged to submit their responses to the proposed changes directly to the ESCC Rother Parking Review, and to the OSCPT&FG for discussion at their meeting on 26 September 2022.
15. Taking each of the points raised in the letter dated 1 March 2022 in turn, it was agreed by the OSCPT&FG that many of the items raised in the letter had been addressed and included in the proposed changes.
16. Concerns were raised by Councillors on some aspects- items 1 to 6 listed below - and which they referred individually to ESCC as part of the consultation process. (Officers have sought clarity from ESCC on items 1, 3 and 6 as shown in italics):
 1. Extending on-street parking restrictions from 6pm to 8pm might have an impact on the evening economy and catering businesses in the town centre– *ESCC state that feedback from residents suggests they are struggling to park when they return home from work. It is proposed to change the new and existing areas of zones C, W, N and the extension to zone E to 8pm. The section of zone E above Magdalen Road remains unchanged.*

It was noted that the charging period for Rother District Council charged car parks was from 8am until 7pm and this had been standardised across the three main towns (Battle, Bexhill and Rye) when the Parking Places Order was varied in September 2021.
 2. Belle Hill may experience displacement parking as not included in restrictions.

Zone E becoming Zone C – concerns raised regarding overspill from existing Zone C residents. *It is felt by ESCC that the changes to Zone C boundary, including extending the hours from 6pm to 8pm and changing some bays to permit holders only, will increase available spaces for residents.*

4. Request for more double yellow lines in various locations including Old Town.
5. Request to increase restrictions in Beeching Road.
6. Permits restricted to only two cars in each House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) resulting in some residents unable to obtain a permit. *ESCC use the Council Tax Register for permit eligibility, with a maximum of two permits per property. In an HMO, for each 'room' to be eligible for a permit each person would need to be registered on the council tax register.*
17. A letter has been drafted, as attached at Appendix A, in response to the ESCC changes and includes reference to the above areas of concern for their further consideration.
18. ESCC has confirmed that they received an overwhelming response of some 1300 submissions to the informal consultation which are being reviewed and these will then form the proposals for the formal consultation, and any unresolved objections will go to planning committee. ESCC confirm that the formal consultation process went live on 24 February 2023 for 21 days; objections, if any, will be addressed; planning committee submission is planned for June 2023, followed by implementation of the changes as soon as possible thereafter, allowing for legal processes, clear roads, weather conditions etc. It should be noted that the timescales are dependant largely on the nature and number of objections received to the proposed changes.

Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference

19. Members considered their Terms of Reference and agreed that these had been fulfilled, with one further report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in early 2023. No further meetings were considered necessary and it is recommended that the OFCPT&FG be disbanded.
20. All other issues relating to the day-to-day operational management of car parks would be dealt with as “business as usual”, liaising with and responding to concerns of local Ward Members. The annual ‘fees and charges report’ that goes to cabinet in December each year provides a mechanism for the review of car park charges.

Conclusion

21. Manor Garden car park payment machine has improved accessibility for contactless, card and cash payments in the car park.
22. The OSCPT&FG concluded that the majority of the changes proposed by ESCC to CPE have been well received by most residents and Councillors. Individuals have raised their concerns on certain aspects in 1 to 6 above

through the consultation process and await further confirmation from ESCC as to the final outcome.

Legal Implications

23. There is no impact on Rother District Council (Off -Street) Parking Places Order 2020 (PPO) but the proposed name change of Manor Barn Gardens car park to Manor Gardens car park will need to form part of a future variation to the PPO.

Environment

24. Local congestion is reduced, and the environment improved by a reduction in noise and air pollution in urban areas.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Deborah Kenneally
e-mail address:	deborah.kenneally@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A – Letter to ESCC Appendix B – Letter to ESCC dated 1 March 2022 Appendix C – Terms of Reference
Relevant previous Minutes:	OSC21/45 CB21/06 CB21/91
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A

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Your ref:
Our ref: DK
Please ask for: Deborah Kenneally
Direct dial no: 01424 787537
Date: 14 March 2023



East Sussex County Council
Civil Parking Enforcement

Malcolm Johnston MBA MSc
BSc(Hons) MCIEH
Chief Executive

Town Hall
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex TN39 3JX

Dear Sir/Madam

RESPONSE TO PROPOSED CHANGES INCLUDED IN CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT REVIEW JULY/AUGUST 2022

I write to you as the Head of Service Neighbourhood Services for Rother District Council (RDC) and as lead officer for RDC Off-Street Car Parks Task & Finish Group (OSCP T&FG). The OSCP T&FG was established in October 2020 to review the impact of the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) on Council owned car parks across the district, and to inform the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) CPE annual review on general issues that have been raised directly to the group by stakeholders regarding on-street parking.

Since its inception, the OSCP T&FG has met on more than ten occasions throughout the last twenty-four months to consider car park data, including levels of revenue, visitor numbers, and most popular hours of use. In addition, two 'calls for evidence' have been completed, inviting parish and town councils, local businesses, community groups and sports clubs to comment on if and how off-street car parking used by their community, stakeholders and staff may have been impacted by the introduction of on-street CPE.

In my previous letter to you, dated 1 March 2022, RDC set out the following observations on a formal basis for your consideration during the first annual review conducted in October 2021 as follows:

1. Overall, CPE has been well received in the town centres and feedback from the Police is positive.
2. It was noted that reduced levels of town centre congestion and parking issues are evident anecdotally, with improved availability of short-term parking on central urban streets due to restricted waiting times.
3. On-street tariffs are felt to be fair and reasonable.
4. Consideration be given to increasing the number of enforcement officers on peak visitor days, particularly in Camber.
5. Hours of enforcement be flexible to cover special events later into the evenings.
6. Seasonal enforcement be considered for Herbrand Walk Bexhill, Camber and Military Road Rye.
7. Streets with time-limited bays were inefficient and costly to enforce, as officers must note time of parking and return to monitor. Therefore, consideration be

given to extending the number of resident permit bays and decreasing number of time limited bays.

8. Consideration be given to resolving inappropriate and displacement parking both within and outside the restricted zones in particular Brockley Road; Wickham Avenue, Millfield Rise, Belle Hill, Amherst Road, Cantelupe Road, Woodville Road, and Lionel Road, Bexhill; Military Road, Rye.
9. Make 'time limited' free parking bays all two hours across the district.
10. Consideration be given to roads surrounding Egerton Park, Bexhill being given restricted parking, and a coach drop-off point and disabled parking near to the drop kerb area outside Bexhill museum.
11. Ticehurst Village and Hurst Green be considered for future extension to the CPE scheme.
12. Enforcement of inappropriate parking on 'yellow lines' be increased in villages, in particular Etchingham and Burwash where commuter parking at railway stations causes frequent congestion.
13. Extend double yellow lines from Camber Sands village along Camber Road on both sides to the A259.

RDC has discussed and collated feedback from their individual submissions to the informal consultation held by ESCC in July/August 2022, and also direct feedback from residents regarding in particular the items raised above and RDC wish to add their response as follows, taking each of the above points in number sequence:

1. The OSCP T&FG feel that most changes suggested in ESCC informal consultation are warmly received, with the possible one exception of extending the restrictions in Bexhill town streets from 6pm to 8pm.
2. Levels of congestion remain reduced from pre-CPE levels and should be further supported by the proposed changes.
3. Parking tariffs remain at the same level and are felt to be fair and reasonable.
4. Enforcement officers can be redirected to areas of concern by direct contact with ESCC enforcement team.
5. As in point 4 above, ESCC enforcement officers can be directed to cover special events.
6. As in point 4 above, ESCC enforcement officers can be directed to cover peak season issues.
7. Residents permit only parking bays have been extended in many areas, and time limited bays have been reduced proportionately.
8. Previous displacement parking now addressed by the extending of parking restrictions to many areas mentioned.
9. Time limited free parking mostly 2 hours except for Buckhurst Road (between Amherst Road and New Park Avenue) which is 4 hours.
10. Coach drop off point now included, as with disabled parking and other restrictions.
11. This request has been noted by ESCC for future consideration.
12. The request for more enforcement against parking on double yellow lines has been noted by ESCC.
13. Double yellow lines have been extended at Camber along A259.

RDC acknowledges that many of the items raised in the letter have been addressed and included in the proposed changes.

However, RDC wishes to raise concerns on certain aspects. These concerns have been referred individually by members of the OSCPT&FG to ESCC as part of the July/August 2022 consultation process and includes items i. to vi. below.

Note: Clarification has been provided by ESCC on some changes and this is included in italics where relevant.

- i. **Extending parking restrictions from 6pm to 8pm** -in order to be consistent across the district RDC changed the chargeable hours in its Off-street car parks from 8pm to 7pm in October 2020 to match the on-street parking restrictions. Members are concerned that restricting parking to 8pm may deter people from coming into the town in the evenings. -ESCC state that feedback from residents suggests they are struggling to park when they return home from work. It is proposed to change the new and existing areas of zones C, W, N and the extension to zone E to 8pm. The section of zone E above Magdalen Road remains unchanged.
- ii. **Belle Hill** may experience displacement parking as not included in the parking restrictions.
- iii. **Zone E becoming Zone C** - concerns raised regarding overspill from existing Zone C residents. It is felt by ESCC that the changes to Zone C boundary, including extending the hours from 6pm to 8pm and changing some bays to 'permit holders only', will increase available spaces for residents.
- iv. **Request for more double yellow** lines in various locations including Old Town. Congestion has increased noticeably as drivers look for free parking on-road.
- v. **Request to increase restrictions** in Beeching Road.
- vi. **Permits restricted to only two cars** in each House in Multiple Occupation resulting in some residents unable to obtain a permit. *ESCC use the council tax register for permit eligibility, with a maximum of two permits per property. In an HMO, for each 'room' to be eligible for a permit each person would need to be registered on the council tax register.*

Most changes proposed by ESCC have been well received by RDC and anecdotally by many residents. However, we trust that the above comments will be noted and considered for future action, along with the feedback gained from the informal consultation.

RDC understands that ESCC received some 1300 responses to the informal consultation and that these will inform the final proposals for the formal consultation, and any unresolved objections will then go to planning committee.

We understand that the final changes to the CPE scheme will be implemented following the formal consultation process in February/March 2023, and we look forward to seeing the results during the summer.

Yours faithfully



Deborah Kenneally
Head of Services Neighbourhood Services

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Your ref: -
Our ref: DK
Please ask for: Deborah Kenneally
Direct dial no: 01424 787537
Date: 1 March 2022



East Sussex County Council
Civil Parking Enforcement

Malcolm Johnston MBA MSc BSc(Hons)
MCIEH
Chief Executive

Town Hall
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex TN39 3JX

Dear Sir/Madam,

Civil Parking Enforcement Review

I write to you as the Head of Service Neighbourhood Services for Rother District Council (RDC) and as lead officer for RDC Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group (OSCP T&FG). The OSCP T&FG was established in October 2020 to review the impact of the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) on council owned car parks across the district, and to inform the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) CPE annual review on general issues that have been raised directly to the group by stakeholders regarding on-street parking.

Since its inception, the OSCP T&FG has met on more than eight occasions throughout the last twelve months to consider car park data, including levels of revenue, visitor numbers, and most popular hours of use. In addition, two 'calls for evidence' have been completed, inviting town and parish councils, local businesses, community groups and sports clubs to comment on if and how off-street car parking used by their community, stakeholders and staff may have been impacted by the introduction of on-street CPE.

RDC is aware that ESCC invited RDC residents and stakeholders to submit their own comments and requests for changes to the existing CPE restrictions, and we understand ESCC is in the process of reviewing nearly one thousand comments to establish commonalities of requests and determine future changes to on-street parking.

RDC would like to add their observations on a formal basis for consideration during the above review as follows:

- Overall, CPE has been well received in the town centres and feedback from the Police is positive.
- It was noted that reduced levels of town centre congestion and parking issues are evident anecdotally, with improved availability of short-term parking on central urban streets due to restricted waiting times.

cont'd/...

- On-street tariffs are felt to be fair and reasonable.
- Consideration be given to increasing the number of enforcement officers on peak visitor days, particularly in Camber.
- Hours of enforcement be flexible to cover special events later into the evenings.
- Seasonal enforcement be considered for Herbrand Walk Bexhill, Camber and Military Road Rye.
- Streets with time-limited bays were inefficient and costly to enforce, as officers must note time of parking and return to monitor. Therefore, consideration be given to extending the number of resident permit bays and decreasing number of time limited bays.
- Consideration be given to resolving inappropriate and displacement parking both within and outside the restricted zones in particular Brockley Road; Wickham Avenue, Millfield Rise, Belle Hill, Amherst Road, Cantelupe Road, Woodville Road, and Lionel Road, Bexhill; Military Road, Rye.
- Make 'time limited' free parking bays all two hours across the district.
- Consideration be given to roads surrounding Egerton Park, Bexhill being given restricted parking, and a coach drop-off point and disabled parking near to the drop kerb area outside Bexhill museum.
- Ticehurst Village and Hurst Green be considered for future extension to the CPE scheme.
- Enforcement of inappropriate parking on 'yellow lines' be increased in villages, in particular Etchingam and Burwash where commuter parking at railway stations causes frequent congestion.
- Extend double yellow lines from Camber Sands village along Camber Road on both sides to the A259.

RDC look forward to receiving the details of the ESCC review in due course and I trust our comments above will add weight to the requested changes to CPE that the Council feels will further improve the success of the scheme.

Yours faithfully



Deborah Kenneally
Head of Services Neighbourhood Services

Rother District Council

OFF-STREET CAR PARKS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

**Terms of Reference**

- Aims and Origin** - To review the level of use of Manor Gardens car park since a payment machine was installed in October 2021.

To review East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) response to the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) first annual review which ended on 30 September 2021. On behalf of Rother District Council provide a draft written response to ESCC's improvements to the CPE scheme for approval.

In September 2020 ESCC introduced Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). CPE introduced charging to certain on-street parking locations throughout Bexhill, Rye and Battle, along with restrictions to residents and visitors parking in other streets without charges. On-street charging will not apply to other areas of the district, but other restrictions such as yellow lines may apply.

The introduction of CPE was felt likely to increase the use off-street car parks under the Council's ownership. Increased usage would have an impact on the accessibility of car parks for local businesses and residents as well as increase the maintenance and enforcement costs to the Council.

The Off-Street Car Parks Task & Finish Group (OSCP T&FG) reviewed data regarding levels of car park use and consumer feedback over the last 12 months and made various recommendations which have been implemented following agreement by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approval by Cabinet. It is considered that this work is now complete other than monitoring the level of use at Manor Gardens car park following the installation of the payment machine.

It was also felt likely that on-street parking restrictions introduced as part of CPE scheme would result in displacement parking and increased congestion of roads without parking restrictions.

Residents, businesses and the community at large were invited to submit feedback to ESCC on suggested changes to the scheme. Following the first 12 months

since implementation of CPE and ESCC's subsequent review of the feedback, it is appropriate for OSCP T& FG to review ESCC's proposed changes to engender improvements to the current scheme.

- Scope**
- a) Review data regarding levels of use of Manor Gardens car park before and after the payment machine was installed in October 2021.
 - b) Review ESCC's response to the CPE annual review and consider their proposed changes to improve the scheme.

- Desired Outcome**
- Evidence of the effective and appropriate levels of use in Manor Gardens car park.
 - Improved use of 'charged for' on street parking
 - Reduced congestion on unrestricted roads to support delivery of services such as waste collections and community buses.
 - Improved parking availability for residents on unrestricted roads.
 - Local environment improved by a reduction in noise and air pollution.

- Timescale**
- OSCP T&FG to reconvene in October 2022
 - Report back to OSC – February 2023

Membership Minimum of 6 Members - TBC

Officer Lead Deborah Kenneally

Quorum Two

Rother District Council

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 13 March 2023

Title: Recommendations of the Health and Well-Being Task and Finish Group

Report of: Councillor Mrs Cook, Chair

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To summarise the work of the Health and Well-Being Task and Finish Group and outline the Group's Final Recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Officer

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

- 1) health and well-being be a central pillar of the next Corporate Plan and Local Plan;
- 2) a partnership with agencies such as ESCC, NHS Sussex and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector be developed and built on a whole systems approach to avoid duplication, maximise resources and ensure connectivity of approaches;
- 3) a health impact (including health inequalities assessment) section be included in Cabinet reports;
- 4) a register of Leisure Provision in the district be compiled, which could include an audit of footpaths and bridleways, village halls, playing fields and green spaces, in addition to the built leisure facilities that are found in our district, in partnership with parish and town councils;
- 5) a Health and Well-Being section be created on the Council website and the Healthy Rother Facebook page be promoted;
- 6) the Council support and work in partnership with parishes and towns to provide leisure facilities by signposting them to relevant funding streams and encourage and promote venues offering facilities for low cost or free meetings/groups and warm spaces in the winter and cool spaces in the summer;
- 7) consideration be given to the introduction of a Healthy Rother marketing event, inviting parishes and towns to promote their provision of leisure and fitness activities, as well as other activities that promote health and well-being;
- 8) healthy eating be promoted by introducing an "I am a Healthy Eating Provider" campaign; as well as linking with the East Sussex Healthy Weight Action Plan;

- 9) consideration be given to introducing grant support for the provision of Early Years Parenting classes by Church groups, Mothers' Union or the National Childbirth Trust, ESCC and NHS Sussex (Maternal Wellbeing Programme);
 - 10) planet saving and energy saving schemes be promoted and residents encouraged to join community schemes, such as at Crowhurst;
 - 11) to work with Primary Care Networks and ESCC Public Health to alert residents to alternatives to medication through social prescribing and promotion of self-help groups;
 - 12) Rother Voluntary Action be supported with the introduction of a Rother Service Hub and compilation of a register of volunteers and their expertise;
 - 13) reports to be received that provide effective and relevant data regarding Lower Super Output Areas;
 - 14) a report to be received from the Environmental Health Service on air quality across the district and other aspects that affect public health; and
 - 15) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review progress after one year and three years.
-

Introduction

1. Overall, it is recognised that Health and Well-being (H&WB) is about more than just feeling well and being happy. Over the course of these meetings, Councillors expressed concern about a variety of aspects of life in Rother that they felt affected all our H&WB. FUNDAMENTALLY, a lot of the issues were the same and focussed around:
 - **Accessibility:** whether for financial, or physical or mental reasons.
 - **Inequalities:** in finance and location rural villages and smaller hamlets compared to our three towns.
 - **Lack of connectivity:** between towns and villages and the impact of out-of-area shopping outlets affecting high streets and corner shops, plus the new trend to shop online and the white van syndrome.
 - **Unhealthy eating habits:** increase in takeaway shops and online ordering service for delivery.
 - **Isolation:** post-pandemic reluctance for many to be out meeting in groups, to access leisure facilities or entertainment venues. Bereavement, isolation and loneliness contribute to a range of mental health issues which in turn affects physical health; this can impact on the NHS services.
2. It was further noted that a reduction in volunteers as the retirement age increases is already having an impact on some groups.
3. There were, and are, many cross overs with the Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Environment Strategy and the Leisure Facilities Strategy but, it is intended that this strategy should sit alongside those and that all four strategies could form foundation stones of both the CORPORATE PLAN and the LOCAL PLAN.

Terms of Reference

4. The Group's scope being:
 - a) Existing built facilities and active Rother
 - b) The Local Plan and Emerging Policy and Spatial Strategy
 - c) Public Health Strategic Alignment
 - d) The Role of Parish and Town Councils
 - e) Environment Strategy

5. The Group's approach was to:
 - a) Review current activity
 - b) Determine Priorities for further work
 - c) Interview stakeholder representatives and collect evidence
 - d) Draw up a draft Strategic report with recommendations for improvement to the provision of health and well-being services in the district.

Impact of the Emerging Local Plan

6. Following an excellent presentation, a question and answer and discussion session noted that:
 - There were many excellent suggestions and ways that H&WB can improve through considerations of accessibility for walking and cycling for green space enjoyment, as well as the provision of public playing areas, as well as wild meadow areas in prospective new estates.
 - Many Councillors spoke in favour of The Spatial Strategy and its desires for garden space and possible community or individual allotment allocation on new estates.
 - Improving public transport, walking and cycling connectivity should be an important consideration as this will improve air quality as well as connectivity between villages and towns.
 - Bexhill was commended for its tree planting projects and other towns and villages for their gardening groups and litter clearing, which build community spirit as well as providing an attractive environment. Groundwork South also offers volunteering opportunities for conservation or gardening in local green spaces (see Hastings and Rother Newsletter 3 February 2023) This is especially relevant to both town and rural "Lower Super Output Areas" where a lack of interest in one's surroundings impacts on mental health.

Public Health Strategic Alignment

7. East Sussex County Council Public Health (PH ESCC) Primary Care Services (PCN):
 - Two amazing and fantastic presentations were received on the impact of health inequalities and the provision and access to these was highlighted by both ESCC and the PCN. Both highlighted the need for early intervention and a whole systems approach to good health.
 - ESCC highlighted that Public Health is the responsibility of all agencies from the local GP to district and county councils, schools to hospitals and clinics as well as licensing authorities!

- One concern by the CCG was over and ineffective medication; it is hoped that by 2026 a newly qualified team of pharmacists would be able to support GP practices, thus reducing waiting list for doctor appointments.
 - The advent of social prescribing is an emerging hope for the future.
8. A presentation on the Anti-Poverty strategy highlighted once again inequalities due to housing conditions, poverty, debt and mental health issues. It was stressed that:
- INCLUSIVITY ACCESSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY should always be taken into account when considering new ventures and that would improve H&WB for all.
 - Ineffective Co-ordination, Promotion and Access is often the cause of people not seeking the help they need.
 - It was suggested that Rother District Council (RDC) could signpost residents who have specific needs towards groups that will help, for example Mencap; RNIB; AGE UK; Homecare and the talking newspaper. Those with Sexual health or menopausal issues too.
 - Other ways of supporting residents are by education and it was felt that parenting courses for early years children, mother and toddler groups and training to cook basic healthy and cheaper foods should all be encouraged. Churches may have a role to play in the first two and food banks and colleges in the latter, although no definitive suggestions could be made that were SMART.
 - Promoting a Healthy Workplace - two Councillors attended courses on Mental Health and Well-being in the work place (see Appendix A) and Menopause in the Workplace (course materials available on request); both these can affect co-workers as well as efficiency, poor ventilation, air quality and adequate lighting and space can all impact on H&WB. RDC is encouraged to set an example and promote the measures they take to protect their employees. Certificates of excellence or an award could be considered.

Review Current Leisure Provider

9. THE LEISURE PROVIDER'S STRATEGY has been well discussed and is very much a part of the H&WB strategy that we are working on. But there needs to be much better promotion, liaison and coordination between the towns and villages and the leisure provision they supply from the small playground at Etchingam to Edgerton Park, from village halls Pilates class to the Freedom Leisure Gym in Bexhill.
- Ramblers and Health walking group provide an amazing variety of self-guided and led walks, graded sometimes by steps counted and sometimes suitability for walkers of all ages and abilities. These groups are generally volunteer led and free!
 - In addition, it was noted that our district has a wonderful network of footpaths, bridleways and way marked routes offering connectivity with railway stations, between villages and along the coast. Walking with a purpose, and often in a group, in peaceful and beautiful countryside can have enormous effects on residents H&WB, but these should not be a well-kept secret and an asset register of footpaths could be collated in

- partnership with the Sussex Ramblers and ESCC footpath adviser and could be promoted to all parishes, towns and groups.
- Junior and Adult Park runs are to be encouraged and supported where they can be.
 - Active Rother have a superb network of groups and societies across the district that offer the combination of social interaction with physical exercise; this information could be promoted on the RDC website with the addition of pop ups or Rother Alerts for specific events.
 - The benefits of swimming for health cannot be underestimated - savings to the NHS, the benefits of social interaction, attaining personal goals; this is for all generations and abilities. However, inaccessibility due to financial restraint, poor public transport, physical impairments and restrictions prevent many from accessing this invaluable facility.
 - Given the importance of swimming to both health and well-being and an important resource for the NHS, it is important that RDC exercises its community leadership role in creating effective partnerships to deliver this for the community it represents.
 - Consultations and open forums, regarding residents' preferences are essential. The provision of free open air green spaces, walks and cycling routes with good connectivity and access was once again highlighted.
 - An audit of playing fields and pitches is awaited and this could be coordinated into a register of Leisure Provision. To consider any gaps in provision across the district.

Role of Parish and Town Councils

10. Many of our parish and town councils (P&TC) are wonderful at providing and caring for playing fields and green spaces, managing wildflower meadows and playgrounds. They often have a managerial role on committees that manage Village and Community Halls, which provide valuable opportunities for reasonably priced fitness classes and local groups with a common purpose (e.g. Knit and Natter, W.I, monthly lunch clubs, as well as Guiding, Scouting and St Johns ambulance associations.
 - Again and again promotion of events, and relevant groups etc has been discussed and this is not solely the responsibility of RDC, but is a two way conversation with the P&TCs who in turn should liaise with groups to "advertise" themselves.
 - It was felt that requesting information from these councils could formulate into a directory which could be placed on East Sussex Community Information Service directories and posted in local libraries, council offices and schools. (Who knew there was a pickleball team in Battle?)
 - RDC could then signpost councils to more specific grants and funds to support and improve (much in the way Village Halls have been offered help with improving insulation ventilation and reducing loss of heat and energy.)

The Environment Strategy

11. Yet again an excellent presentation which highlighted the importance a good healthy and attractive environment can impact communities H&WB.
 - Extreme Heat, Cold Drought and flooding need to be addressed and today's warm spaces may be needed as cool spaces in the future.

- As in the Local Plan, retro fitting done properly can aid residents, but amateur DIY-ers can cause problems with mould and foul air.
- Monitoring Air quality has already begun and more is planned for the future; this will help us correlate that affect poor air quality has on those with asthma, COPD and other physical breathing difficulties.
- We also considered other elements that would improve H&WB through schemes to monitor and improve our air quality, water quality and reduce energy costs, not just for new homes but also by retro fitting and through promotion, encouraging residents to join community schemes such as at Crowhurst.

Our Strategy Should Be SMART

12. Specific What
 Measurable How
 Achievable Who
 Relevant Where
 Time-based
13. This strategy should sit alongside the Anti-Poverty Strategy, Built Leisure facilities strategy, Environment Strategy and the Healthy Rother Strategy and be incorporated into both the Local Plan and the Corporate Plan.
- health and well-being be a central pillar of the next Corporate Plan and Local Plan;
 - a health impact section be included in Cabinet reports;
 - a register of Leisure Provision in the district be compiled, which could include an audit of footpaths and bridleways, village halls, playing fields and green spaces, in addition to the built leisure facilities that are found in our district, in partnership with parish and town councils;
 - a Health and Well-Being section be created on the Council website and the Healthy Rother Facebook page be promoted;
 - the Council support and work in partnership with parishes and towns to provide leisure facilities by signposting them to relevant funding streams and encourage and promote venues offering facilities for low cost or free meetings/groups and warm spaces in the winter and cool spaces in the summer;
 - consideration be given to the introduction of a Healthy Rother marketing event, inviting parishes and towns to promote their provision of leisure and fitness activities, as well as other activities that promote health and well-being;
 - healthy eating be promoted by introducing an “I am a Healthy Eating Provider” campaign;
 - consideration be given to introducing grant support for the provision of Early Years Parenting classes by Church groups, Mothers’ Union or the National Childbirth Trust;
 - planet saving and energy saving schemes be promoted and residents encouraged to join community schemes, such as at Crowhurst;
 - to work with Primary Care Networks and ESCC Public Health to alert residents to alternatives to medication through social prescribing and promotion of self- help groups;
 - Rother Voluntary Action be supported with the introduction of a Rother Service Hub and compilation of a register of volunteers and their expertise;

- reports to be received that provide effective and relevant data regarding Lower Super Output Areas;
- a report to be received from the Environmental Health Service on air quality across the district and other aspects that affect public health; and
- the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review progress after one year and three years.

Conclusion

14. These recommendations are specific and I believe, achievable and relevant to improving the H&WB of all our residents.
15. Their success is measurable by hits on the website, increased use of facilities, increased membership of fitness and self-support groups as well as a reduction in applications for intervention in medical and financial support.
16. H&WB is not measurable as such and so this is an ongoing work.
17. It is intended to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review this after one year and then after three years.

Implications

Financial Implications

18. There are no financial implications for the proposals arising from this report. This section will be updated depending on the recommendations adopted by the Committee to Cabinet

Environmental Implications

19. There are no environmental implications for the proposals arising from this report. This section will be updated depending on the recommendations adopted by the Committee to Cabinet

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

Report Contact:	Councillor Mrs Cook
e-mail address:	cllr.vikki.cook@rother.co.uk
Appendices:	A – Mental Health and Well-Being in the Work Place B – Terms of Reference C – Report of the Healthy Rother Working Group
Relevant previous Minutes:	N/A
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None

Report on Westminster Health Forum Conference held online on 29 November 2022.

The Forum was on Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Most speakers began by highlighting the increased numbers of the population seeking support for their mental health because of the pandemic. Many speakers made similar points which I will try and summarise. Young People (especially care leavers), vulnerable adults (those with autism and learning difficulties) and ethnic minorities were highlighted as those most in need. Some speakers highlighted mental health in the workplace, and I learnt about SILO working and the downward spiral and huge impact that comes when mental health issues are not recognised early.

The first session particularly focussed on OVERMEDICATION and looked at possible alternatives particularly for those diagnosed with autism and learning difficulties, reflecting on the failures of the one solution fits all. The suggestion that there should be more positive patient support, an increase in non- medication intervention.

Professor BHUI spoke about disparity in Health and Wellbeing across Ethnicities, geographically and between towns and Cities (he didn't mention villages and hamlets!) and wider social inequalities.

He spoke particularly about reducing Community Treatment Orders (CTO) and subsequent detentions citing the need for early intervention.

This was echoed by Dr Kalindindi who commented on the lack of awareness about how to stay mentally well and lack of awareness of early symptoms. This applies in the home, the workplace and in schools. She added that often offers of help are not personal enough or appropriate to the age, gender or culture of the "patient".

Dr Kousoulis intimated that we should look beyond the NHS and in order to ensure Good Mental Health for All we need to provide Green spaces, Debt advice, Early intervention and opportunities for Social Interaction, in his words, more prevention more improvement. He commented that many people are struggling with political and government uncertainties and a cross party approach to a Mental Health and Wellbeing 10-year plan should be continued.

Dr Peter Bloomfield echoed many of these themes and spoke about the value of digital services acknowledging that in some areas digital poverty is a contributory factor. The session was summed up by Baroness Tyler the Lords spokesmen for Mental Health stating that Collaboration between ALL services not just the Integrated Care Board (ICB) or Integrated Care Service (ICS) is needed and includes Education/ Social Services/ Voluntary Services and Workplaces.

The Second session chaired by Baroness Merron, the Lord's shadow minister for Health and Social Care, focused on the Mental Health Act 2022 (currently under legislative scrutiny) and the new bill that is hoped will progress through parliament (albeit it slowly over the next two years).

Dr Kathy Smethurst spoke about how this act would be a case for change, highlighting that rates of detention under the Mental Health act have doubled since 1983, with more ethnic men pro rata of the population. It is hoped that this new act will:

- Restrict CTO;

- Give more choice to “patient”;
- Ensure individual needs are met;
- Give a choice of nominated responsible person and / or advocate. (Not necessarily a family member but positively an Ethnic match if requested)

It is also hope that this process will be streamlined through digitalisation and accept the need to listen to parents and care givers.

Becky Wardle (Rethink Mental Illness) spoke about:

- the roles of the Community and Experts by experience, in particular with peer support, community engagement and breaking down of barriers;
- the role of the voluntary sector, which should not just be a tick box exercise but unlocking experience in diversity and potential expertise in mediation and dialogue.
- The need for investment in evidence and impact, early intervention means less admissions to A and E!

Sophie Corlett from MIND spoke about the alarming increase in Children and Young adults (YP) quoting the pre pandemic statistics respectively 1 in 9 and 1 in 6, now post pandemic set at 1 in 6 and 1 in 4. Agreeing with much that the previous speaker had said Sophie also spoke about the need for increased funding in schools and in YP drop in sessions in safe places where they can talk without intervention from parent or teacher about their issues.

The third speaker was inspiring Konrad from Advantage spoke about the success of his work with YP by bringing together Professional football teams and local NHS trusts to offer mentoring and opportunities to improve physical well-being through sport, local players from within the community had a greater impact on YP whose culture was similar.

Mabel Lie was the last speaker in this session, and she spoke about the impact a lack of funding was having on Vulnerable Adults and how some training and work in administration had had a positive impact.

She spoke about The Impact on specific Groups of vulnerable adults and how group and voluntary work and training had enabled them to support one another and move forward positively.

Thirdly she spoke about the impact on YP, Care- leavers, Loneliness and Vulnerable YP, and the success of a Young Women’s engagement programme and a peer project.

Baroness Merron concluded that It is not just about the funding, it is about the RIGHT FUNDING MAKING THE RIGHT IMPACT.

The third session was given by a Councillor from London called Jacqui who spoke about the inequalities within communities with high ethnic minorities and how she has begun to support communities who want to change that.

Rother District Council

HEALTH AND WELLBEING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Terms of Reference

- Aims and Origin** - The Corporate Plan 2020 – 2027 identifies the link between economic inequality and health and wellbeing within socio-economic groups. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) in their deliberations on their annual work programme identified this topic as one for further investigation. Rother District Council, through its operations, strategies, and partnerships, has the ability to influence, to varying degrees the health and wellbeing of residents. It is the ambition of this task and finish group to identify opportunities for promoting healthier, more active lifestyles, and how Council operations and strategies might be better aligned to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for residents.
- Scope**
- a) Existing Built Facilities and Active Rother.
 - b) Local Plan – Emerging Policy and Spatial Strategy.
 - c) Public Health Strategic Alignment.
 - d) The Role of Parish and Town Councils.
 - e) Environment Strategy.
- Approach**
- a) Review current activity.
 - b) Determine priorities for further work.
 - c) Interview stakeholder representatives and collect evidence.
 - d) In line with research findings, draw up a draft strategic report with recommendations for improvement to the provision of leisure, health and wellbeing services in the district.
- Desired Outcomes**
- a) Achieve a comprehensive understanding and analysis of Health and Wellbeing issues in the Rother district.
 - b) Present a forward looking and solution-focused report to Cabinet incorporating innovative ways of addressing health and wellbeing issues in the Rother District.
- Timescale**
- Preliminary meeting and review – October 2022
 - Three themed meetings – Winter 2022/23
 - Analysis, report writing and recommendations – Winter 2022/23
 - Report back to OSC – March 2023
- Membership** - Five Non-Executive Councillors as nominated by the

Committee (not necessarily Members of the OSC).
J. Barnes, S.J. Coleman, Mrs V. Cook, C.A. Madeley,
G.F. Stevens and R.B. Thomas

Officer Lead - Ben Hook, Director – Place and Climate Change

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REPORT OF THE HEALTHY ROTHER WORKING GROUP

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- a. **Introduction**
- b. **The Legal Framework**
- c. **The 10 Strategic objectives with suggested KPIs**
- d. **Appendix 1- The District Councils' Network Overview of the Activities of District Councils in the field of Health**
- e. **Appendix 2-Examples of ways in which Healthy Rother responds to concerns raised in the consultation on the Corporate Plan**
- f. **Appendix 3-policies implemented by Essex to counter health inequality**

A INTRODUCTION

At an Alliance Group meeting, a decision was taken to explore the possibility of including in the Corporate Plan the topic of the promotion of good mental and physical health within Rother.

Having worked on this subject, the Working Group strongly believe that 'Healthy Rother' should be an important heading within the Corporate Plan. We believe this because the heading includes areas which are not properly covered elsewhere, and we believe that the promotion of good mental and physical health is central to the work of District Councils.

Any worthwhile policy of Rother District Council should tend to contribute to good mental and physical health while, conversely, any policy aimed at enhancing health should have benefits of another kind. For example, healthy housing is good housing.

The District Councils' Network Argument for the place of Health Promotion in the Agenda of District Councils

The District Councils Network has succinctly summed up the reasons why District Councils' work is intimately connected with physical and mental health outcomes.

It states that 'District Councils make a major but often under-recognised contribution to the health of citizens and communities. As English devolution and the move towards integrated place-based public services gathers pace, they will be critical partners of the NHS and other tiers of local government programmes.'

The full case for the role of District Councils in relation to public health has been included in Appendix 1.

In order to develop Key Performance indicators, it would be helpful to act on the King's Fund recommendation that District Councils carry out more Health Impact Assessments (HIAs)

The district councils network believe that councils can play a key role in supporting the flourishing of individuals and communities in five key areas. They are strategic leadership, services and commissioning, strengthening communities, organisational level activity, and measuring wellbeing outcomes.

B THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

There are key pieces of legislation which give District Councils the powers they need in order to act in these areas

These include:

1 The Local Government Act 2000, which empowers local authorities to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area and the new power of general competence.

2 Legislative changes set out in the Local Government Act and the Public Capital Act 2007 and the Duty to Involve 2009 which enabled local authorities to devolve power to local communities. The proposed new responsibilities for local government in public health, as set out in the Health White Paper 2010, are also relevant. Local area partnership working can help ensure that a wellbeing lens is applied both to a council's policies and services and to the work of its partner organisations and agencies. A wellbeing approach might be built into new ways of conceiving, designing and delivering services.

.....

C. THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Committee set about the task of mapping the field, and, by considering what approaches had been followed in various District Councils, identified ten Strategic Objectives. We have suggested Key Performance Indicators which could be used to measure progress in each of them.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1- TO SUPPORT THE PEOPLE OF ROTHER IN THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFE CYCLES

A number of District Councils have decided to focus on experiences shared by significant numbers of their residents at key stages and events in their lifetimes. There are certain transitions and events in people's lives that generate particular challenges and stresses, and it is at such times that various forms of support from within the community can be invaluable.

We identified two particular stages in life trajectories at which District Councils have offered support. This first was young mothers and families. This can include all types of family, whether conforming to traditional configurations or not. Young mothers can often feel isolated, and find their capacity to cope can be severely tested. District Councils can provide befriending, support and advice services to assist at this often challenging time.

District Councils can intervene to support families and individuals across the entire life span, from infancy to old age.

It is not always realised how cost effective intelligently targeted intervention can be. For example, it has been discovered that 77% of older people who move into residential accommodation do so 'because they cannot manage their gardens.' Support with gardening, not only leads to people being more willing to go outside and enjoy their gardens, enabling people to remain in their own homes. We believe that such support could be delivered

through partnership with community organisations like Bexhill in Bloom and Bexhill Neighbourhood gardeners.

We believe that looking at the issues raised by a consideration of the issues faced by particular groups will help to shape the kinds of intervention which can result in constructive change. As an example of this, we looked at the needs of older people in a little more detail.

Older people,

These include: being enabled to be social and active; being stimulated and energised; gaining knowledge and maintaining brain health; maintaining mobility and balance; being able to live a life of enjoyment and fun. Some may need to have access to dementia-friendly activities. Many would benefit from gaining knowledge about ageing well. Activities like dancing could be helpful. Community buses to take people to centres like the De La Warr for entertainment, or to community halls, would have the benefits of reducing loneliness and could help with emotional and mental health issues.

Cllr Timpe is working with Active Rother on an event around the subject of ageing well on September 14th.

Potential KPIs.

1 Figures for people accessing gardening assistance

2. Figures for membership of social clubs and societies

3. Clear evidence of growing provision of community buses to take people from the villages to events with a social character

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: TO ENABLE THE PEOPLE OF ROTHER TO REACH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OPEN TO THEM THROUGH HEALTH EDUCATION

Health Education.

An inexpensive way to achieve this might be to appoint a Councillor reporting to the Cabinet, as a Health Champion. We envisage this post-holder establishing a network of Health Champions throughout the District.

We have already made a small move in the direction of achieving this by setting up the 'Healthy Rother' Facebook Group. It is attracting steadily increasing membership and there is already some posting by groups and individuals.

The principle behind it, and of a concentration on this area, is to bring knowledge related to health together, and to disseminate it in order to build a community which is health conscious in effective ways. Topics include: anti-smoking, eating healthily, how to cope with depression and anxiety; what to do if you are feeling suicidal or are self-harming; difficulties faced by young people; pregnancy; breast cancer awareness; prostate trouble-the warning signs; avoiding diabetes and how best to manage it; how to avoid heart attack and stroke; attaining and maintaining a healthy weight; exercises to maintain mobility and flexibility; how to become a runner (couch to 5k-BBC); learning to swim; water safety.

By disseminating knowledge, it should be possible to build a community which is health conscious in effective ways. People also need to know how to recognise when they need help and how to access it. An inexpensive way to continue this kind of work in the immediate future might be the Council to appoint a Councillor as a Health Champion.

Potential KPIs.

- 1) **The appointment of a Health Champion.**
- 2) **The Health Champion to produce figures on the impact of their work**
- 3) **Membership and usage figures for Healthy Rother**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: TO ENSURE HOUSING POLICY PROMOTES THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

Housing

Housing is essential to health, and this raises issues squarely in the competencies of District Authorities. Insulating homes properly is one of the most effective ways of improving health, and counteracting poverty caused by excessive fuel bills. We wondered what progress is being made with this and whether it was something with which Alliance Homes should be or could be involved. We wondered how enforcement was going where tenants had unsatisfactory housing, noting that it was often poor landlords who failed to ensure proper insulation for rented property. We also wondered whether the RDC employed or could employ a handy person to help people who needed someone trustworthy to carry out minor repairs and home adaptations, similar to the service around providing facilities of this kind at Wealden DC.

We are also concerned that the Council ensures that grants are available to make homes more accessible. There is some evidence that take-up of these grants runs at a very low level, which suggests that further promotion would be invaluable.

We have learned that a new government grant has been created to help Councils finance this kind of work.

Potential KPIs

- 1) **Produce figures for number of homes with retro-fitted insulation in Rother**
- 2) **Figures for the number of people accessing a handyperson service, and levels of satisfaction with the service**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN LEISURE SERVICES WHICH ATTRACT PEOPLE TO LIVE IN THE DISTRICT AND PROVIDE ALL RESIDENTS WITH VARIED ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

Leisure Facilities.

Rother District Council is committed to bringing all Bexhill leisure facilities, currently provided by Freedom Leisure, onto one site on Downs Road but believes that it is prudent to wait until we understand the emerging patterns of demand for leisure facilities before committing substantial capital investment on new buildings. We propose to conduct a comprehensive community consultation in early 2022 to assess how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected expectations and demands for leisure facilities like indoor sports, swimming and keep fit facilities. We will also look at what innovations are now required to achieve our new Healthy Rother objectives. The consultation results will feed into the work to review existing facilities in Rye as well as the work to redevelop the existing Bexhill Leisure Centre and pool at Glyne Gap and of other facilities across the district.

Swimming

As a group, we support the idea of providing good swimming facilities. We wondered whether we had, or could negotiate, an arrangement which Wealden has with Freedom Leisure whereby swimming can be prescribed under a Social Prescribing scheme. (See below)

Running

PARK RUN- Cllr Gray investigated the idea of initiating with a start-up cost of £4000, which includes the provision of a defibrillator. It is a PARK RUN requirement to undertake running it on a weekly basis. It is hoped that an existing organisation, like Bexhill Runners, would be interested in taking on the organisation, and that Rother would help with the £4000 start-up costs. We support the idea in principle.

Potential KPIs.

- 1) Number of people taking part in the Park Runs**
- 2) Statistics from Freedom Leisure about usage, including a breakdown of the figures showing some categories of user.**
- 3) Relate the results of the Leisure Survey to the pattern of Leisure Services provided**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: TO PROMOTE ACTIVE TRAVEL IN THE INTERESTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Active Travel.

Walking.

We plan to organise a Walking Festival and suggest it could be run from August 16th to August 22nd. We thought there was a lot of scope for organisations to run even more walks than they do now. Suggested organisations include the Ramblers throughout Rother, Walking for Health groups, the Bexhill Museum Association and Bexhill Heritage. We would like to see all the footpaths in Rother properly mapped so their continued existence could be guaranteed for

generations. We thought more use could be made of the Combe Valley Country Park and the Pevensey Levels.

Cycling.

The Council can encourage cycling in a number of ways. It can promote, especially amongst its contractors and partners, the 'Cycle to Work' scheme. It can work with the County Council on the positioning of bike parks. It can endorse government policies over the reallocation of space, policies which fit well with the Council's Environment Policies, and which can also play a part in the Regeneration agenda. It can find ways to introduce the subject of cargo bikes, especially electric ones, which can provide non-polluting delivery services, particularly relevant in an era of increased internet shopping. It can endorse the idea of cycling infrastructure investment, working in conjunction with the County Council on schemes that improve connectivity using physically segregated cycleways. This would benefit both cyclists and other road users. RDC can liaise with schools to encourage cycling and cycling training and can support separate facilities for cyclists in its larger green spaces.

We have been very impressed by the Pump track in Battle and believe that schemes of this kind could be promoted throughout the District.

Potential KPIs

- 1) **Statistics on the Cycle to Work Scheme e.g. number of participating firms and individuals**
- 2) **Statistics on the number and type of bikes bought at private bike vendors in Rother**
- 3) **Numbers of students travelling to school or college by bike**
- 4) **Number of participants in cycling training**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6: TO ADD TO AND ENHANCE THE GREEN SPACES OF ROTHER IN TERMS OF AESTHETICS, ECOLOGY, BIODIVERSITY, PLEASURE AND UTILISATION

Green spaces.

Green spaces provide many benefits to communities, including recreational value, both informal (e.g. dog walking) or formal (e.g., organised sports); wildlife habitats; climate change mitigation and adaptation (e.g. sustainable drainage features; wild flower meadows; aesthetic value; local character and distinctiveness; supporting healthy lifestyle (opportunities for physical activity outdoors) and mental wellbeing (providing access to nature); community cohesion and possibly food growing. Our urban green spaces in Rother include parks and gardens, playing fields and sports pitches, footpaths bridleways and cycle routes; Village greens; informal green spaces; cemeteries and church yards; allotments and community gardens and roadside verges. By focusing on urban green spaces, we can provide the greatest benefit for people and biodiversity. Making our green spaces more attractive will

encourage people to relax and spend more time outdoors, helping local communities to socialise and contribute to healthy living.

We favour the appointment of Tree Wardens. We would like the Council to implement 'No Mow May' and urge ESCC to create as many wildflower verges as possible.

We support the ideas of a creation of a 'Rother Forest' and the 'Doubling Nature' ideas .

Potential KPIs

- 1) **Number of new trees planted in Rother and by whom as against number of trees lost**
- 2) **Growth in acreage of Green Spaces**
- 3) **Increased applications for allotments**
- 4) **Growth in community food marketing**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7: TO MAKE AVAILABLE AND TO FURTHER NON-MEDICAL WAYS OF IMPROVING MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH THROUGH ACTIVITY, INVOLVEMENT AND SOCIALISATION.

Social Prescribing

This facility can reduce the strain on existing services while providing more swift access to effective ways of improving health. Some Districts have opened non-medical social prescribing centres in conjunction with community connectors which have encouraged people to cycle or walk more, to develop their social relationships and take up hobbies like gardening. This can help people to reduce their reliance upon both prescription drugs and various forms of addiction.

Potential KPIs

- 1) Number of people referred to a social prescribing service and follow-up statistics on the outcome of the referrals**
- 2) Statistics from the NHS on Social Prescribing.**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 8: TO SPREAD A SENSE OF BELONGING, OWNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ON ALL APPROPRIATE LEVELS.

Creating and Enhancing Community.

A sense of belonging has been shown to have a very significant effect upon health outcomes. This issue will be explored further in subsequent versions of this document.

‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ (New Economic Foundation (NEF), 2008) is a well-known evidence-based approach to creating wellbeing in individuals and communities.

Five Ways to Wellbeing

- *ONE. Connect – Connect to the people around you: with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours, in home, work, school and in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building on these connections will support and enrich you every day.*
- *TWO. Be Active – Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.*
- *THREE. Take notice – Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.*

- *FOUR. Keep Learning – Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a new responsibility at work, Fix a bike. Learn how to play a favourite instrument or cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.*
- *FIVE. Give – do something nice for a friend or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and create connections with the people around you. (NEF, 2008)*

Potential KPIs

1 Number of people accessing courses throughout Rother. Particular institutions could be a focus e.g. the De La Warr, parish halls, University of the Third Age, Bexhill Museum, the WEA and Children’s Centres; membership of bowling, football and tennis clubs; clubs like RAFA.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 9: TO ENABLE THOSE WITH SPECIFIC CHALLENGES TO LIVE THEIR LIVES IN FULL AND SATISFYING WAYS

Helping those with specific challenges.

This may include sight, hearing or movement difficulties. There are already national societies with local branches throughout Rother such as the Royal National Institute for the Blind which works with the N.H.S. to provide support services, group meetings and practical aids. Bexhill Homecare and MENCAP are examples of other voluntary organisations which provide relevant assistance. We propose to raise awareness of what is available with an opportunity for the local authority to work with voluntary organisations and the Clinical Commissioning Group to facilitate co-ordination, publicity and to create specific projects like the Seaford Beach Access project.

Potential KPIs

- 1) **Membership of specific organisations like the RNIB, Scope, Mind**
- 2) **Number of people reached and helped by specific organisations like Mencap, Rother Voluntary Action etc**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 10: TO WORK TOWARDS THE ELIMINATION OF HEALTH INEQUALITIES WITHIN ROTHER

Health Inequalities have been highlighted during the Pandemic, it becoming clear that the poorer regions of the country have suffered both the highest rate of infections and deaths, as well as being the areas where there has been the lowest uptake of vaccines; higher mortality has also been noticed amongst ethnic minority communities, due, at least in part, to the predominance of customer-facing jobs requiring physical presence as against those which could be switched online. In ordinary times, life expectancy is very affected by wealth; the

inhabitants of Chelsea, despite its high pollution levels, enjoy one of the most extended life expectancies, while Middlesbrough has one of the lowest. Poverty is correlated with unhealthy life styles and high stress levels. In tackling the causes of health inequality, a Council is inevitably tackling wider issues of inequality in the country. This is an area where intervention can be cost-effective, as health inequalities are a drain upon health services of all kinds. What has been done by Essex is cited by the District Councils Network as an example relevant at District Level, and its example has been included in an appendix.

Many families who live in poverty can be helped with their food budgets by having opportunities to learn more about cooking from scratch and economical shopping. Food banks and Children's Centres offer courses for families while the Mothers' Union produce booklets for university students with recipes and hints for eating well on a budget. District Councils can publicise such ventures and can also provide them in, for example, community halls.

Here in Rother, there may be opportunities to follow the lead of District Councils which have negotiated contracts with providers to enable more disadvantaged citizens to enjoy leisure or cultural facilities free of charge. Subsidised travel can be offered to poorer people from outlying areas to centrally situated entertainment venues like the De La Warr or to parish halls where forms of entertainment (e.g. pantomimes, amateur drama, music performances) are taking place.

Potential KPIs

- 1) **Statistics on poverty within the District correlated with survey results of investigation into: a) accepted indices of healthy eating b) accepted measures of participation in active travel c) accepted indications of exercise levels.**
- 2) **Evidence of take-up of free or reduced price services offered by the Council**

INTERIM CONCLUSION OF THE HEALTHY ROTHER WORKING GROUP

Healthy Rother has a rightful place as a separate theme of the Corporate Plan.

D APPENDIX 1. THE DISTRICT COUNCILS' NETWORK ON THE ROLE OF DISTRICT COUNCILS IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH

District councils play a key role in keeping us healthy. They provide core local services including economic development, planning, housing, leisure, well-being and environmental services for local communities - areas that are increasingly recognised as vital components of population health systems.

District Councils have a direct role in house building, homelessness prevention, housing adaptation and enforcement powers to improve the condition of private rented housing.

District councils provide better services and access to high quality green spaces. These are important to mental as well as physical health and have been shown to reduce the impact of income inequality on mental health and well-being.

District Councils provide a range of environmental health services including tackling pollution, food safety inspections, pest control and emergency planning.

A strong local economy is associated with a range of better physical and mental health outcomes, primarily through good quality stable employment. Unemployment can double the risk of premature death and one in seven men develop clinical depression within six months of losing their jobs.

District councils have an important role in sustainable and equitable economic development through their role in local enterprise partnerships, economic growth teams and other functions.

Economic development, housing and other District Council activities require active planning to maximise their health impacts.

District Council planners are key players in encouraging active commuting, adequate design and position of green spaces, affordable housing and equitable economic development.

Well-connected communities are good for health. Those with strong social relationships a 50% higher survival rate than those with poor social relationships.'

These themes have been developed further in papers by the Local Government Association, the government, the University of Kent and the King's Fund.

In order to develop Key Performance indicators, it would be helpful to act on the King's Fund recommendation that District Councils carry out more Health Impact Assessments (HIAs)

E. APPENDIX 2. HEALTHY ROTHER CAN BE INTRODUCED INTO THE CORPORATE PLAN AS A RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

We would like to stress that we are citing the Chamber of Commerce response as an illustration. We are not endorsing either the Chamber of Commerce or its response, and we are not implying that the Chamber would necessarily support the inclusion of Healthy Rother in the Corporate Plan, or indeed any of the ideas contained in this paper; we are simply pointing out overlaps between their suggestions and ours, as we see it.

The introduction of 'Healthy Rother' can be truthfully presented as a response to the consultation. For example, in its official response, the Bexhill Chamber of Commerce called for 'eradication of the levels of deprivation in Sidley and Central Wards based on indices of deprivation', this connecting to the objective of eliminating health inequalities.

The Bexhill Chamber of Commerce also suggests *'We would like to see RDC embrace the massive leisure opportunities that will be created by the staycation boom.'* Obviously, leisure is a major theme in the **'Healthy Rother'** proposal.

The Chamber of Commerce says *'There should also be plans to deliver Walking and Cycling routes in, around and to the 3 main towns and around all villages. Each village becoming a destination hub for cycling and walking facilities that would substantially boost their local economies with hospitality and other amenities. We should draw on the experience of other key walking/ cycle destinations like the Peak District/Moors for models of this.'* Cycling and Walking feature as Active Travel as one of the themes of **Healthy Rother**.

On Health, the Bexhill Chamber of Commerce comments that there is *'no mention of improvement to be made on how to keep Rother a safe place to live work and play. Public health should be a key ongoing feature after Covid.'* This is a central rationale for the insertion of **'Healthy Rother'** into the Corporate Plan.

On leisure and sports, the Bexhill Chamber of Commerce says *'it is quite disturbing that there is nothing in the CP that recognises the need and demand for not just amenity sports facilities but significant destination leisure facilities- climbing walls, splash balls, wave pools, five aside pitches, tennis courts, squash courts, soft play areas, trampoline parks, skate parks, velodromes- these are what now attract and service visitors and locals needs. High quality leisure facilities are the drivers of demographic shift, high quality meritocracy employment, deprivation reduction and economic regeneration.'* These are important statements, emphasising that there is an intimate connection, not an antagonism, between the promotion of healthy activities and the promotion of economic health.

The Bexhill Chamber of Commerce concludes that it is not criticising the plan per se – *'we are merely pointing out that as this is still the consultation stage, we would like to see an improved and more dynamic version created as a template for delivery over the next seven years.'* This call for revision in response to the consultation is a clear opportunity to insert into the Corporate Plan the subject of **'Healthy Rother'**, under which heading a number of their themes belong.

F APPENDIX 3. Essex is a County but its work has been cited by the District Councils Network as an example to District Councils

"Essex County Council has been recognised as one of the most innovative local authorities in the country and that reputation is rooted in the council's interpretation of the local government wellbeing power. As the United Kingdom moved into recession, Essex and its partners, recognised the need for effective action.

Here are some examples of its interventions: firstly, it provided direct financial assistance to economically vulnerable residents. Essex offered a one-off payment of £100 to its most economically vulnerable council taxpayers with the suggestion that this could be used to offset council tax bills. This is a policy that could be considered by the District Council if it feels unable to reduce to zero the council tax bills of its poorest and most struggling residents.

Secondly Essex increased the capacity of local credit unions. It pledged £170,000 over three years to support Essex Savers, the countywide credit union, and offered further support to smaller localised credit unions. This helped ensure that residents could get ethical and suitable sources of credit as bank lending contracted.

Thirdly, it stepped up its programme to reopen local post offices. It developed a massive grant programme to preserve threatened branches. As a result, ten branches were successfully reopened. “

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Rother District Council

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 13 March 2023

Title: Recommendations of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group

Report of: Director – Place and Climate Change

Ward(s): Bexhill Central

Purpose of Report: To advise on the findings of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group

Officer

Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED**: That the findings of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group be considered and the following recommendations be made to Cabinet, that:

- 1) the draft Technical Advice Note 3 – Windows in Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area is not published;
- 2) the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area be retained;
- 3) policies relevant to the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area, and its specific issues, are considered and examined through the Council's Local Plan review;
- 4) enforcement be increased within the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area, particularly regarding shopfronts and replacement windows on the front elevations of buildings;
- 5) subject to understanding cost implications, the Council provide free pre-application advice to applicants which related to the shopfronts and windows on the front elevation of buildings within the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area; and
- 6) all potential funding opportunities to support improvements to the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area are explored in collaboration with Bexhill Heritage and the Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism.

Introduction

1. This report summarises the work of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group (BTCCAT&FG) and pulls together the final recommendations to be approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). The report represents the outcomes of the work carried out on 22 February 2023, which comprised evidence gathering and the provision of expert advice.

Analysis / Details of the proposals

2. On 29 September 2022, OSC resolved that a Task & Finish Group be set up to consider a proposed draft Technical Advice Note which set out advice on how planning applications for replacement windows (Minute OSC22/20 refers).
3. On 21 November 2022, the OSC resolved that BTCCAT&FG be established and that it comprises of Councillors P.C. Courtel, Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, L.M. Langlands, C.A. Madeley and G.F. Stevens. They were required to review the draft Technical Advice Note 3 (TAN) – Windows in Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area (BTCCA) under Terms of Reference (ToR) at Appendix A agreed by OSC at the meeting; and to present recommendations to OSC at this meeting (13 March 2023).
4. The ToR defined that there would be a ‘full day exploratory meeting’ in January or February 2023. The BTCCAT&FG day took place on Wednesday 22 February 2023.
5. Councillor Madeley was elected chair at the start of the meeting. Members of the BTCCAT&FG considered the ToR. The aims and origins were noted, and the BTCCAT&FG agreed that its remit was to consider:
 - a) national legislation regarding conservation areas;
 - b) information and guidance provided in the draft Technical Advice Note (TAN) which was appended to the report; and
 - c) what could be done to support businesses and investment in BTCCA without damaging or devaluing the conservation area.
6. The ToR required the views of local businesses and Bexhill Heritage (BH) to be presented. BH and the Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism (BCCT) accepted invitations to present. Councillor Bayliss also presented as a Ward Member for Bexhill Central. These presentations, followed by questions from the BTCCAT&FG, were part of the morning ‘evidence gathering’ session.
7. The ToR also required the advice of historic building experts and planning officers to be received. The Planning Policy Team Leader and Conservation Officer both presented and answered questions from the BTCCAT&FG. Deborah Gardener, of DGC Historic Building Consultants listened to the presentations, question and answer sessions and provided feedback and advice.
8. The Planning Policy Manager summarised the morning’s session. This is set out in the attached minutes at Appendix B.
9. In the afternoon’s session, the BTCCAT&FG considered the morning’s evidence gathering from stakeholders and expert advisors.
10. It was agreed that the following were key points be considered and included within the recommendations / report presented to the OSC at this meeting (13 March 2023):
 - It was clarified that under the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, an Article 4 direction removed all or some of the permitted development rights in a given area. Consideration was given to

issuing an Article 4 direction, as this could control works that could threaten the character of the BTCCA. Issuing an Article 4 would involve a complex and detailed process; after consideration it was thought that this would not be necessary.

- General agreement that the draft Technical Advice Note 3 – Windows in BTCCA was not supporting the Conservation Area and therefore should not be published.
- Members were keen to retain the “Conservation Area” designation for Bexhill Town Centre.
- As part of the Council’s Local Plan review, consideration be given to examining relevant policies regarding the BTCCA through that process.
- Enforcement should be increased, strengthened and cases resolved. Residents / landlords should not be allowed to install replacement windows without previously obtaining planning permission; too many retrospective applications were being received.
- To deter retrospective and unlawful applications, it was strongly suggested / recommended that the Council provided free pre-application advice which related to shopfronts and windows on the front elevation of buildings within the BTCCA. Encouraging residents / landlords to seek advice prior to making any changes to their properties within the BTCCA, could / would assist with reducing appeals and enforcement proceedings including costs.
- Ideally, unified windows would be installed throughout the same building, particularly within flats etc.
- Important that sensitive, high quality materials (modern where appropriate) were used to retain / enhance historical buildings within the BTCCA.
- A wooden window could potentially have a double life span compared to a standard uPVC window; regular maintenance would be required.
- Important to encourage and not deter investment within the BTCCA.
- All relevant funding opportunities be explored to support improvements to the BTCCA.

Options

11. Other options were considered:

- BH’s proposal to promote the use of high quality, well-designed uPVC windows; and to abandon the current practice of refusing planning applications for uPVC windows was considered but it was noted that every case should be considered on its own merits.
- BCCT’s proposal to consider de-designating the BTCCA was considered but is not recommended.

Conclusion

12. The BTCCAT&FG day met the Scope, Approach and Timescale set by the BTCCAT&FG and has delivered Desired Outcomes.

Strategic Management Team Comment

13. OSC is recommended to advise Cabinet that:

- a) the draft Technical Advice Note 3 – Windows in BTCCA is not published;
- b) the BTCCA be retained;

- c) to consider and examine policies relevant to the BTCCA, and its specific issues, through the Council's Local Plan review;
- d) to recommend that enforcement be increased within the BTCCA, particularly regarding replacement windows;
- e) subject to understanding cost implications, the Council provide free pre-application advice to applicants / applications which related to the shopfronts and windows on the front elevation of buildings within the BTCCA; and
- f) to explore all potential funding opportunities to support improvements to the BTCCA.

Financial Implications

14. The provision of free pre-application advice and increased enforcement would be a financial cost which needs to be taken into consideration.

Human Resources Implications

15. The provision of free pre-application advice and increased enforcement could lead to an increased human resource requirement which needs to be taken into consideration.

Environmental & Sustainability Implications

16. Issues relating to energy efficiency and the sustainability of timber and uPVC were discussed at the meeting. The recommendations enable these issues to continue to be considered on a case by case basis under national legislation, local adopted planning policy, and national planning policy guidance.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Jeff Pyrah, Planning Policy Manager
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Appendices:	A – Terms of Reference, 21 November 2022 B – Meeting Minutes, 22 February 2023
Relevant previous Minutes:	OSC22/20
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None

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

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 initiatives¹ relating to the Town Centre Conservation Area, including its designation, policy and guidance.
 - d) 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.

¹ 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**
 - Councillors Courtel, Mrs Earl-Williams, Langlands, Madeley and Stevens.
- Officer Lead**
 - Jeff Pyrah – Planning Policy Manager

Rother District Council

**BEXHILL TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA
TASK & FINISH GROUP**

22 February 2023



Minutes of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea on Wednesday 22 February 2022 at 9:15am.

Task and Finish Group Members present: Councillors P.C. Courtel, Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, L.M. Langlands, C.A. Madeley and G.F. Stevens (in part).

Other Member(s) present: Councillor Mrs C.A. Bayliss (in part).

Advisory Officers present: Director – Place and Climate Change (in part), Planning Policy Manager, Conservation Officer (in part), Team Leader – Planning Policy (in part) and Democratic Services Officer.

Also present: David Beales (in part) and Alexis Markwick (in part) – Bexhill Heritage, Tracey Love (in part) and Howard Martin (in part) – Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and Deborah Gardner (in part) – DGC Historic Building Consultants.

BTC22/01. ELECTION OF CHAIR

(1)

RESOLVED: Councillor C.A. Madeley was appointed as Chair of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group.

BTC22/02. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(2)

There were no apologies for absence.

BTC22/03. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

(3)

Declarations of interest were made by Councillors in the Minutes as indicated below:

Bayliss Agenda Item 5 – Personal Interest as she resided in the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area and was a member of Bexhill Heritage.

Courtel Agenda Item 5 – Personal Interest as he resided in the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area.

Earl-Williams Agenda Item 5 – Personal Interest as a member of Bexhill Heritage.

- Langlands Agenda Item 5 – Personal Interest as the Council’s representative on Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and was a member of Bexhill Heritage.
- Madeley Agenda Item 5 – Personal Interest as a member of Bexhill Heritage.

BTC22/04. TERMS OF REFERENCE / TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE
(4)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) established the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group (BTCCAT&G) and agreed its Terms of Reference (ToR) at its meeting held on 21 November 2022.

Members considered the ToR; the aims and origins were noted, and the BTCCAT&G agreed that its remit was to consider:

- a) national legislation regarding conservation areas;
- b) information and guidance provided in the draft Technical Advice Note (TAN) which was appended to the report; and
- c) what could be done to support businesses and investment in BTCCA without damaging or devaluing the conservation area?

The BTCCAT&G would gain an understanding of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area (BTCCA), the legislation related to the designation, the benefits of such a designation and the impact on businesses and residents and analyse the draft TAN, to make recommendations for any appropriate proposed amendments, along with other initiatives that would enhance the BTCCA’s commercial viability, reduce levels of deprivation and enhance the quality of its built environment.

The draft TAN provided advice on how the Council’s adopted planning policies should be applied to replacement window planning applications within the designated BTCCA. It explained the legislative background and summarised relevant planning policy and Historic England guidance.

Consideration was also given to the Minutes of the OSC meeting held on 22 September 2022.

BTC22/05. EVIDENCE GATHERING
(5)

a) Bexhill Heritage

The Chair welcomed David Beales and Alexis Markwick of Bexhill Heritage (BH) to the meeting. BH had provided a report on the Council’s draft Technical Advice Note 3 (TAN) – Windows in Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area, which outlined BH’s opinion and recommendations. BH was a charitable incorporated organisation which promoted the conservation, protection and improvement of Bexhill’s built environment and open spaces.

The following key points were noted:

- BH would support an extension to the existing Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area (BTCCA); no details were given;
- the draft TAN was not soundly based on Local Planning Policy;
- Disagreed with the TAN and officer views regarding uPVC windows. BH believed that uPVC could be a suitable replacement for timber sash windows.
- there was no Local Plan policy on windows within the BTCCA (specifically highlighted Policies EN2 and EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy [RLPCS]) and applicants could therefore conclude that they were not protected and uPVC was acceptable;
- planning permission (Section 55 of the Planning Act) was not required for replacement of traditional design or original wooden sliding sash windows by uPVC windows of the same design. Did not “materially affect” the external appearance of the building as a whole. Specifically referred to an appeal decision in Buxton where an Inspector agreed that planning permission was not required for the replacement of timber sliding sash windows with the specified uPVC replacements;
- “planning was about people and for people.” The older generation should not be subjected to living with ill-fitted single glazed windows and the applicant’s personal circumstances should be considered when the Council assessed planning applications;
- high quality, well designed uPVC sliding sash replacement windows fully addressed the needs of the RLPCS;
- views of the residents were overlooked by the Council and investment was deterred;
- the principle feature of the building was the window opening, not the windows (irrespective of the design);
- a new approach was required, as follows:
 - the Council accepted the legality of “no planning permission”;
 - the Council influenced relevant stakeholders and manufacturers to use high quality, well designed uPVC windows;
 - abandon current practice of refusing planning applications;
 - do not adopt the draft TAN;
 - organise public structured workshops on Conservation matters; and
 - provide a simple advisory illustrative handout;
- referred to an appeal in Eastbourne where the Planning Inspectorate upheld the appeal to allow wooden windows to be replaced with uPVC in the Conservation Area and commented that other cases suggested an increasing acceptance of uPVC of a high quality of design and finish; and
- showed photographs of acceptable and unacceptable window examples within the BTCCA, and in the Town Hall (which was not in the Conservation Area).

In conclusion, it was BH’s opinion that high quality traditionally designed and installed uPVC windows were acceptable replacements for wooden windows of traditional design in Conservation Areas.

Members had an opportunity to put forward questions² and the following points were noted during the discussion:

- 55% of Bexhill Town Centre properties had uPVC windows;
- good quality uPVC traditional sash sliding windows were available (textured effect like wood);
- the longevity of wooden compared to uPVC windows. Concern was aired regarding the quality of wood (hard or soft) available and being used;
- it was clarified that uPVC windows could be and were recycled; and
- the Director – Place and Climate Change clarified that the Town Hall was not within the BTCCA and that the uPVC windows were installed before it was Grade II Listed.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chair thanked David Beales and Alexis Markwick for BH's contributions and attendance at the meeting.

ACTION 1: That Bexhill Heritage's comments be noted and considered during the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group's deliberations.

b) Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

The Chair welcomed Tracey Love and Howard Martin of Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism (BCCT) to the meeting. BCCT had provided a report on the Council's draft Technical Advice Note 3 (TAN) – Windows in Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area, which outlined BCCT's opinion and recommendations. BCCT was established in 1925 and currently consisted of over 120 businesses (from Eastbourne to Rye), charitable and social enterprises. Their mission was to protect and promote the interests of businesses / employees across Bexhill and the surrounding area.

The following key points were noted:

- agreed with Bexhill Heritage except in relation to their suggestion to extend the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area (BTCCA) and advised that the designation was preventing investment;
- Bexhill Central was considered the most deprived ward in Rother which predominantly covered the BTCCA;
- poverty and extreme deprivation existed in many of the squalid flats above the BTCCA shops. Decision to "eat or heat";
- had undertaken a survey in January 2023 – 232 window portals (68% were uPVC frames). Across the entire BTCCA, it was clear that contemporary uPVC double glazing was preferred to insulate homes;
- the Council had funded uPVC windows at a property in Eversley Road;
- inconsistent and confusing Council Planning policy and decisions;

² The Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism asked whether they could ask questions. They were advised that asking questions was the role of the Task and Finish Group members only. They stated their concerns with this approach.

- adoption of the TAN would increase costs to renovate and restore windows, would not be economically viable and would deter residents / landlords from upgrading rotten windows;
- wooden windows looked scruffy and did not provide adequate protection from weather conditions e.g. Brighton Pier had installed uPVC windows;
- standard uPVC windows were acceptable on upper floors, less prominent (“nobody looked up”);
- additional costs would be required to maintain wooden windows e.g. erection of scaffolding, this was not practical in a town centre location;
- gave an example of a local entrepreneur who was considering whether to invest further in the town because of the costs and difficulties caused by the Conservation Area requirements;
- BCCT stated that Council officers were recommending local timber window repair companies to residents / landlords;
- BCCT had produced a Windows Regeneration Policy for consideration, in consultation with Bexhill Heritage, local Bexhill Specialist Heritage Architects and local Councillors; and
- BCCT welcomed investment in the town centre but advised that the BTCCA designation was hindering this and did not address modern issues. Bexhill Town Centre could not be compared like-for-like to other Conservation Areas in the district e.g. Battle, Bexhill Old Town and Rye.

BCCT would support any planning applications that were sympathetic to the improvement of the town centre, promoted privately invested regeneration and enhanced Bexhill as a better place to work, live and trade. BCCT strongly recommended a political policy change to allow reasonable development which supported a thriving economic environment.

Members had an opportunity to put forward questions and the following points were noted during the discussion:

- BTCCA consisted of a mixture of commercial and residential properties, some had been converted for temporary accommodation and some were being used as Airbnbs; and
- properties (ground floor shop units and floors above) were either in one ownership or with flats owned separately. Larger companies (multiples e.g. banks) tended to own the whole property (exact ratios were unknown).

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chair thanked Tracey Love and Howard Martin for BCCT’s contributions and attendance at the meeting.

ACTION 2: That Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism’s comments be noted and considered during the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group’s deliberations.

c) Ward Member, Councillor Bayliss

The Chair welcomed Councillor Bayliss to the meeting who provided her considerations of the Council’s draft Technical Advice Note 3 (TAN) –

Windows in Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area (BTCCA), as the local Central Ward Member.

The following key points were noted:

- she regularly called-in window replacement planning applications to be considered by the Planning Committee;
- Bexhill Central was the second most deprived ward in Rother;
- wooden windows were often in poor condition, visually unattractive, provided poor insulation from cold (gave a specific example where the resident could not afford to heat the whole flat) and noise, were expensive and detracted from the BTCCA;
- installation of wooden windows would increase costs and reduce availability of affordable accommodation;
- in appearance, uPVC traditional sliding sash windows were comparable with wooden windows;
- uPVC windows were recyclable (e.g. broken down and used in the production of paving slabs);
- “inconsistent” approach to planning applications and no enforcement cases;
- energy efficiency of uPVC windows demonstrated a commitment to create energy efficient homes for local people;
- important that the public realm within the BTCCA was maintained and upheld;
- important to “encourage and not discourage” investment in BTCCA; and
- advised that she had always supported the BTCCA designation and wanted to see it preserved and improved. She stated that this required consistent planning decisions and active enforcement. She also suggested that an Article 4 should be made to prevent windows being replaced with poor uPVC replacement where this was currently permitted development for individual dwellinghouses.

In conclusion, she proposed that a new TAN was produced that was more permissive and supported high quality uPVC replacement sliding sash windows in the BTCCA.

Members had an opportunity to put forward questions and the following point was noted during the discussion:

- questions were raised regarding what enforcement cases had been considered and concluded regarding replacement windows in BTCCA and those that were currently under investigation. Information was not available at the meeting.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chair thanked Councillor Bayliss for her contributions and attendance at the meeting.

ACTION 3: That Councillor Bayliss’ comments be noted and considered during the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group’s deliberations.

d) Legislation and Policy

Consideration was given to the report of the Team Leader – Planning Policy that set the legislative and planning policy context for the development of the Council’s Technical Advice Note 3 (TAN) – Windows in Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area (BTCCA). The TAN conformed with national and local planning policy for conservation areas and was therefore considered an appropriate and useful tool to assist applicants replacing windows within the BTCCA.

The report detailed and explained the legislation framework; context of a conservation area designation; local authority requirements and functions; ‘replacement windows’ were defined as ‘development’; as well as National Planning Policy Framework, Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and Development and Site Allocations Local Plan criteria. Comparable guidance documents had been produced by neighbouring authorities. The place to change policy was through the Local Plan review.

The Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act protects heritage and the public good. Private interests could be emotive, but the duty was to protect the Conservation Area.

The BTCCA Appraisal explained why the area was designated. It dated from 2004 and noted that the use of modern materials for windows and roofs had been detrimental to the Conservation Area, but that this was recoverable.

The draft TAN sets out a series of generic scenarios to aid understanding of how planning decisions regarding replacement windows were made.

During the discussion the following was noted:

- Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) grants were awarded in the mid-2000s to improve the public realm and provided funding for the installation of new shopfronts; this funding was no longer available; and
- there was a separate, existing Council policy guidance document that provided advice to commercial properties / shop fronts etc.

e) How Far We Have Come

Consideration was given to the report of the Conservation Officer that detailed progress to date of improvements to and economic regeneration of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area (BTCCA).

The following key points were noted:

- BTCCA designated in 1990s;
- approximately £700,000 funding had been received as part of the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme 2002-2006 to bring shops back into use, make environmental improvements and repairs within the town centre;

- just under 50% of all of the buildings within the conservation area had elevations that consisted completely of uPVC casement windows;
- Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act – it was a statutory duty for the Council to “pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area” when exercising planning functions;
- the Technical Advice Note (TAN) had been developed using Historic England best practice guidance and provided all scenarios for window replacement;
- the TAN was developed to provide clarity / help, not to cause confusion / hinder;
- only 3% of uPVC windows were recycled;
- wall and roof insulation, solar panels and draught excluders also assisted with energy efficiency (not just double-glazed windows); and
- considered good practice to provide advice and guidance on window replacement in Conservation Areas; neighbouring local authorities produced / provided similar documents to the TAN.

During the discussion the following was noted:

- removal of BTCCA designation could and would be negative for the local economy; the declassification process was unknown;
- uPVC windows were introduced in 1970s, during the 1980s-1990s were popular and commonplace in many households;
- town centre did not feel like a conservation area, as many properties were run down and in poor condition;
- community involvement would be required to create a vibrant living town where people wanted to live and work;
- a question was raised regarding whether imported timber contributed towards and increased the country’s carbon footprint and if the sequestering that timber offered would outweigh transportation impacts. Members were advised that timber was sustainable and sourced in the UK and northern Europe (Norway – predominantly Accoya);
- Accoya wood had a 60+ year warranty; and
- Appeal decisions – Planning Inspectors were independent decision makers and opinions varied.

The Chair asked Deborah Gardner to make her observations in response to the presentations and the following was noted:

- requiring planning permission enabled the Council to assess the quality or form (design) of the replacement windows;
- without the requirement of planning permission, there could be no enforcement which could lead to erosion of features and negative impact on the BTCCA;
- the local plan policies do not specifically mention windows but also do not refer to other specific design features. The policy referred to form and design and Victorian and Edwardian character;
- traditional timber windows contributed to the overall character and appearance of a traditional period property. They highlighted the refinement and proportionality of the host building;

- uPVC could not replicate the refinement and proportions of timber. Creating prominent larger frames would unbalance the aesthetic character and appearance of the building;
- existing retrofitted timber sliding sash windows would upgrade thermal efficiency and insulation;
- draft TAN addressed concerns regarding “inconsistencies”. Pages 19 and 20 of the draft TAN made the position clear and outlined the Council’s position for future planning applications; and
- draft TAN considered the form, design and detailing of windows as well as material in accordance with planning policy with the overriding aim to preserve or enhance the special character of the BTCCA.

The Chair thanked Deborah Gardner for her contributions and attendance at the meeting.

ACTION 4: That the comments of the officers and Deborah Gardner be noted and considered during the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group’s deliberations.

(Councillor Bayliss declared a Personal Interest in this matter in so far as she resided in the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area and was a member of Bexhill Heritage and in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

(Councillor Courtel declared a Personal Interest in this matter in so far as he resided in the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area and in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

(Councillors Mrs Earl-Williams and Madeley each declared a Personal Interest in this matter in so far as they were members of Bexhill Heritage and in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

(Councillor Langlands declared a Personal Interest in this matter in so far as she was the Council’s representative on the Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and was a member of Bexhill Heritage and in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

BTC22/06. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE HEARD
(6)

The Planning Policy Manager summarised and gave a brief overview of the key points discussed and considered.

BTC22/07. DISCUSSION OF ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETING AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(7)

The Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group (BTCCAT&FG) discussed the main issues identified from the evidence gathering presentations and reports. It was agreed that the following were key points to be considered and included within the

recommendations / report presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) at the meeting scheduled to be held on 13 March 2023:

- it was clarified that under the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, an Article 4 direction removed all or some of the permitted development rights in a given area. Consideration was given to issuing an Article 4 direction, as this could control works that could threaten the character of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area (BTCCA). Issuing an Article 4 would involve a complex and detailed process; after consideration it was thought that this would not be necessary;
- general agreement that the draft Technical Advice Note 3 – Windows in BTCCA was not supporting the Conservation Area and therefore should not be published;
- Members were keen to retain the “Conservation Area” designation for Bexhill Town Centre;
- as part of the Council’s Local Plan review, consideration be given to examining relevant policies regarding the BTCCA through that process;
- enforcement should be increased, strengthened and cases resolved. Residents / landlords should not be allowed to install replacement windows without previously obtaining planning permission; too many retrospective applications were being received;
- to deter retrospective and unlawful applications, it was strongly suggested / recommended that the Council provided free pre-application advice which related to shopfronts and windows on the front elevation of buildings within the BTCCA. Encouraging residents / landlords to seek advice prior to making any changes to their properties within the BTCCA, could / would assist with reducing appeals and enforcement proceedings including costs;
- ideally, unified windows would be installed throughout the same building, particularly within flats etc;
- important that sensitive, high quality materials (modern where appropriate) were used to retain / enhance historical buildings within the BTCCA;
- a wooden window could potentially have a double life span compared to a standard uPVC window; regular maintenance would be required;
- important to encourage and not deter investment within the BTCCA; and
- all relevant funding opportunities be explored to support improvements to the BTCCA.

It was confirmed that BTCCAT&FG would review the report informally before it was presented to the OSC.

RESOLVED: That the following recommendations be included within the report being presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting scheduled to be held on 13 March 2023:

- 1) the draft Technical Advice Note 3 – Windows in Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area not be published;
- 2) the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area be retained;

- 3) to consider and examine policies relevant to the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area, and its specific issues through the Council's Local Plan review;
- 4) to recommend that enforcement be increased within the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area, particularly regarding replacement windows;
- 5) subject to understanding cost implications, the Council provide free pre-application advice to applicants / applications which related to the shopfronts and windows on the front elevation of buildings within the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area; and
- 6) to explore all potential funding opportunities to support improvements to the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area.

BTC22/08. TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was agreed that the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group (BTCCAT&FG) had completed its Terms of Reference. Therefore, the Chair proposed that the BTCCAT&FG be dissolved. The Chair thanked all the Members and officers who had supported and contributed to the work of the BTCCAT&FG.

CHAIR

The meeting closed at 4:05pm.

BTC220223jh

Rother District Council

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 13 March 2023

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

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To summarise the work of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group and outline the Group's Final Recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Officer

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

- 1) the Council has regard to the socio-economic duty when making decisions and that relevant policies and procedures be amended to reflect this; and
- 2) the socio-economic duty be reflected in the new Corporate Plan;

AND

It be **RESOLVED**: That progression of the delivery of the Anti-Poverty Strategy Action Plan and the effectiveness of the Cost of Living page on the website be noted.

Introduction

1. At Council on 21 September 2022, a Motion from Councillor Coleman was considered in respect of the Cost of Living Emergency which requested that the former Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group (APT&FG) be reconvened to give consideration to voluntarily adopting the socio-economic duty to affirm the Council's commitment to preventing and combatting hardship, with particular considerations to any impact on those with protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
2. The APT&FG reconvened for a one-off meeting on 5 January 2023 and this report summarises the outcome from that meeting.

Background

3. Whilst there is no national policy agenda focused specifically on tackling disadvantage caused by socio-economic inequality, the Equality Act 2010 provided a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. Local authorities have statutory obligations under this Act and some Councils have chosen to build on these obligations to address key inequalities by voluntarily adopting and implementing Section 1 – the socio-economic duty.

The Socio-Economic Duty

4. Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 introduced a socio-economic duty on public bodies that required them: “when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions” to “have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage”. Section 1 asked public bodies to consider how their decisions and policies could increase or decrease inequality that resulted from socio-economic disadvantage.
5. By voluntarily adopting the duty it would strengthen the ongoing anti-poverty work, support an inclusive economy, and equalities approaches, and contribute to the ‘levelling up’ agenda.
6. The Council would need to amend its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and processes, including the Equality Impact Assessment process and in doing so, ensure socio-economic inequality is considered in all future policy development such as the new Corporate Plan the new Corporate Plan, Regeneration Strategy, and Housing Strategy.
7. It will also be necessary to ensure appropriate training is in place for Members in having due regard to the duty in decision-making and officer training in how to apply the duty to inform new projects, service, and policy changes.

Next Steps for the Anti-Poverty Strategy – A Partnership Approach

8. Since the adoption of the Anti-Poverty Strategy in September 2022, Rother Voluntary Association (RVA) have taken on responsibility for resourcing meetings of the multi-agency Anti-Poverty Steering Group, which is governed by the Rother Local Strategic Partnership, and its meeting routinely and the Terms of Reference have been adopted.
9. One of the areas of focus has been taking forward a multi-agency hub in Bexhill. The Local Strategic Partnership will take a more active role in developing future iterations of the Strategy and its vision, together with ensuring its objectives are achieved. The APT&FG considered how the Anti-Poverty work could be integrated with other areas of work, such as the Health and Well-Being Strategy.

Cost of Living Information and Signposting

10. The APT&FG received an update from the Digital Transformation Project Manager on the performance of the Cost of Living page on the Council’s website, which had been promoted on MyAlerts and through social media platforms as well as a Facebook advert. At the beginning of January, the pages had attracted 1,415 views (200 of which were directly following the Facebook advert). The Warm Spaces item on the page was advertised on MyAlerts on 9 December 2022 and generated 700 views over the proceeding weekend, accounting for half of the total views to date. The APT&FG were pleased to note the effectiveness of the promotion.
11. The Cost of Living page had yielded a good level of views and was in the top 25 most viewed pages of the Council’s website. The page was made of an accordion design, which was more user-friendly on a mobile device. The page

would be advertised on Facebook again and an easier URL created for residents to remember.

Recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12. It is recommended that:

- 1) the Council has regard to the socio-economic duty when making decisions and that relevant policies and procedures be rewritten to reflect this;
- 2) the socio-economic duty be reflected in any new Corporate Plan; and
- 3) progression of the delivery of the Anti-Poverty Strategy Action Plan and the effectiveness of the Cost of Living page on the website be noted.

Legal Implications

13. The Equality Act 2010 provided a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. Local authorities had statutory obligations under this Act and could build on these obligations to address key inequalities by voluntarily adopting and implementing Section 1 – the socio-economic duty.

Financial Implications

14. There are none arising directly from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. Increasingly, Local Authorities are recognising the need to understand what tools and mechanisms are available to them to address the consequences of socio-economic disadvantage. Embedding the Socio-Economic Duty in the Council's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Equality Impact Assessment process gives us a mechanism to ensure we are considering the impact on different socio-economic groups in our decision-making.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Lorna Ford
e-mail address:	lorna.ford@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	
Relevant previous Minutes:	C22/47
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2022 – 2023

DATE OF MEETING	SUBJECT – MAIN ITEM IN BOLD	Cabinet Portfolio Holder
13.03.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report of the Rother Community Safety Partnership • Performance Report: Third Quarter 2022/23 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 3 2022/23 • Recommendations of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group • Recommendations of the Health and Well-Being Task and Finish Group • Recommendations of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Task and Finish Group • Recommendations of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group 	Jeeawon Field Timpe Vine-Hall
24.04.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-in and Urgency Procedures • Draft Annual Report to Council • Working Practices and Work Programme Review 	
WORK PROGRAMME 2023 - 2024		
05.06.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Report: Fourth Quarter 2022/23 • Annual Work Programme • Housing Allocations Policy 	
10.07.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Outturn 2022/23 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 1 2023/24 	
11.09.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Report: First Quarter 2023/24 	
16.10.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29 	
20.11.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Report: Second Quarter 2023/24 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 2 2023/24 • Annual Review of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019-2024) 	
22.01.24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Revenue Budget Proposals 2024/25 • Key Performance Targets 2024/25 	
18.03.24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and Disorder Committee: to receive a report from the Community Safety Partnership • Performance Report: Third Quarter 2023/24 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 3 2024/24 	
22.04.24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-in and Urgency Procedures • Draft Annual Report to Council 	
ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration inc. Leisure Centre, Fountains, Skate Park and Accessibility of Green Spaces across the district 		

- Review of the Economic Regeneration Strategy
- Peer Review
- Draft Corporate Customer Services Strategy Proposals
- Litter Strategy
- Review of the Tourism Strategy and the impact of Airbnbs – date TBC
- Impact of Airbnb and second homes in Rye/Winchelsea/Camber
- Effectiveness of 'MyAlerts'
- Update report from the Local Strategic Partnership
- Update report from the Health and Well-Being Board
- Corporate Plan review – to be referred back by Cabinet – date TBC
- Review of the Financial Stability Programme – date TBC
- A review of Mental Health across the district – date TBC
- Progress on the Environment Strategy (2020)