

**DRAFT Terms of Reference
Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group**

1. Aims and origin

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

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

1.2 The aims of the Group are to:

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

2. Objectives

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

3. Background

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

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

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

4. Resources

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

5. Timetable

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

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