

## Rother District Council

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| <b>Report to:</b>         | Overview and Scrutiny Committee   |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 14 March 2022   |
| <b>Title:</b>             | Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy   |
| <b>Report of:</b>         | Joe Powell (Head of Service Housing and Community)  |
| <b>Ward(s):</b>           | All   |
| <b>Purpose of Report:</b> | For the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and recommend to Cabinet the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy for consultation.  |
| <b>Officer</b>            |   |
| <b>Recommendation(s):</b> | It be <b>RESOLVED</b> : That Cabinet be requested to approve the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy for consultation with key stakeholders and the wider population of Rother. |

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### Introduction

1. The Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2027 includes several objectives that aspire to improve the economic, housing, health and wellbeing outcomes of its residents; therefore, adopting measures and supporting local initiatives that address some of the causes of income, health and housing poverty (and alleviate its effects) will support the Council in its wider corporate ambitions.
2. In January 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved the formation of an Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group (APT&FG) and set its Terms of Reference (Minute OSC19/48 refers). The aim of the APT&FG was to investigate the effects of income, health and housing poverty on local people and the local services that support them. The original timetable for the activity of the APT&FG has been revised due to the impact of COVID-19.
3. In June 2021, the APT&FG made recommendations to Cabinet that an Anti-Poverty Strategy be developed for Council approval (Minute CB21/18 refers). The recommended aim of the strategy was for statutory and community services operating in the Rother district to work together to reduce levels of poverty. The main objectives of the strategy were recommended as follows:
  - **Coordination**: develop local strategic commissioning and operational structures to coordinate services designed to alleviate poverty.
  - **Access**: maximise the accessibility of services so that those in the greatest need can be reached.
  - **Promotion**: promote information, advice and support to service users and professionals.
4. It was also recommended that the development and delivery of the strategy be coordinated through existing partnership structures such as the Local Strategic Partnership.

## **Strategy Development**

5. On 4 November 2021, a multi-agency event was held at The Pelham, led by the Council in partnership with Rother Voluntary Action (RVA). The purpose of the event was to review the recommended objectives and identify the high level aims and actions that would support us to achieve these.
6. The event was well attended and productive. Attendees were presented with feedback and case studies that had been secured by RVA following a series of consultations with local community groups from urban and rural areas of the district. We also presented the findings of the APT&FG based on the evidence gathering sessions it had undertaken. The objectives were reviewed and supported by those present at the event with a series of high level aims and actions also identified. These actions have been captured within the draft Action Plan appended to the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy at Appendix A.
7. The group also identified that the aims and actions identified within the strategy and its action plan need to be delivered by a multi-agency Anti-Poverty Strategy Steering Group (APSSG) to ensure objectives remain achievable. Progress reports on the action plan will also be fed to the Rother Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The LSP will support and monitor the progress of the strategy action plan through the promotion of its objectives through the East Sussex Strategy Partnership. The LSP will also support the coordination of existing resources and influence future service commissioning through its networks.

## **Consultation**

8. The consultation plan, as attached at Appendix B, sets out the groups we intend to consult and the methods we intend to use. The majority of the consultation will take place via an online questionnaire; however, telephone and written consultation responses will be accepted.
9. The consultation questionnaire, as attached at the end of Appendix B, sets out several questions related to the draft document and proposed strategy objectives and action plan.

## **Conclusion**

10. It is clear from the strategy development that the causes of poverty are multiple and complex and its symptoms wide ranging. The effects of poverty are felt by a range of different sectors of the community across different demographic groups and geographic locations. Many of the causes of poverty cannot be influenced effectively at a local level and the Council cannot effectively tackle the symptoms of poverty on its own.
11. The strategy proposed has been developed between key local partners to ensure that the objectives identified are relevant and that the actions proposed ambitious, while being achievable within the resources available locally. The priority is to form the APSSG and begin to deliver the high level aims and actions that have been identified. The APSSG will develop and refine its objectives as it establishes itself. It will identify gaps in service provision and areas where greater collaboration and coordination between services can support improved outcomes for our residents. The Strategy should therefore be

regarded as an important first step towards developing a more comprehensive response to tackling poverty locally.

12. The APSSG will provide periodic progress updates to the LSP in its role as the governing body responsible for monitoring the strategy and reporting progress to the East Sussex Strategic Partnership.

### Legal Implications

13. An Equalities Impact Assessment will need to be completed before a final Strategy is adopted.

### Environmental Implications

14. Current and future district environmental strategies and interventions will need to consider the needs of those experiencing poverty of access to adequate income, health, housing and education and ensure these needs are met.

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

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| Chief Executive:           | Malcolm Johnston   |
| Report Contact Officer:    | Joe Powell   |
| e-mail address:            | <a href="mailto:joe.powell@rother.gov.uk">joe.powell@rother.gov.uk</a>     |
| Appendices:                | A – Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy<br>B – Consultation Plan and Questionnaire |
| Relevant previous Minutes: | OSC19/48<br>CB21/18  |
| Background Papers:         | None   |
| Reference Documents:       | None   |