

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.
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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;
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 - 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

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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