

Northern Rother District Councillors' Report December 20.

Additional Restriction Grant

The Government recognises that some businesses that are required to close may not have rateable commercial premises and therefore won't be covered by the main Local Restrictions Grants Scheme (LRSG). Therefore the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) has been made available by Government to Local Authorities to use at its discretion to support local businesses affected by the national restrictions. The awarding of this grant is at the total discretion of the Council but in accordance with the [guidance issued by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy \(BEIS\) \(pdf\)](#)

Full details can be found at the following link:

<https://www.rother.gov.uk/business/information-for-businesses/Community-Grants-Scheme-open-for-applications>

Local community groups and organisations are invited to apply for a share of nearly £80,000 from a district-wide grant scheme.

Round two of Rother District Council's Community Grant Scheme is currently open for applications. Groups can apply for funding ranging from £500 to £30,000, up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the total cost of the project.

The scheme offers funding for community projects that enhance the lives of residents in Rother by helping them to provide community facilities, purchase equipment or host local events across the district.

The scheme has supported many varied and wide-reaching projects including new tables for Ewhurst and Staplecross Village Hall, the installation of a tea station in St James The Great Church, Ewhurst Green, and the planting of a new wood by Bexhill Environmental Group.

Full details available at the following link:

<https://www.rother.gov.uk/news/community-grants-scheme-open-for-applications/>

Review of Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019-2024)

Three strategic priorities were set: Increasing the supply of Housing; Rough Sleeping, Homelessness and Meeting Housing Aspirations; and improving the quality and suitability of existing and new build housing. The outcome of the full review is in the Improving Delivery Plan.

Key highlights from the Improving Delivery Plan are:

Priority 1: Increasing the supply of Housing

In December 2019, the Council approved setting up a local authority owned housing company, Alliance Homes (Rother) Ltd, which has been legally incorporated and the Business Plan approved;

The main priority of the company is to accelerate delivery of all forms of housing in Rother, with an ambitious target of delivering 1,000 new homes over the following 15 years. The Business Plan set out an initial 3 year delivery plan focusing on sites already in Council ownership with planning permission/planning potential or that had been acquired as part of other Council-led projects. The delivery of the site at Blackfriars, Battle was of significant importance;

The Company would seek opportunities to acquire sites allocated for housing in the Rother District Local Plan and associated Neighbourhood Plans;

The strategy identified empty homes as a wasted resource in view of the chronic shortage of housing to meet need, to include affordable housing, a draft Empty Homes Action Plan has been developed to bring back empty properties into use.

Priority 2: Rough Sleeping, Homelessness and Meeting Housing Aspirations

Rother Tenant Finder was launched in October 2019 to improve access to accommodation in the private sector to reduce homelessness, by incentivising landlords to consider homelessness households and supporting tenants to access and sustain private sector tenancies:

Up to March 2020, 55 households have been helped through the service, resulting in private sector tenancies being agreed. However the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced the numbers of tenancies secured in recent months; The Council commissioned the Homelessness Unity Group (HUG) to deliver a new 'Safe Place' service from March 2020 which delivered from St Barnabas Church in Bexhill which was designed to support the reduction of rough sleeping through the provision of a community meeting space available twice weekly .

Councillors Martin Mooney and Tony Ganly.