

NORTHERN ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT MAY 2025

Dear Clerks

It has been a busy month with all the normal monthly meetings and the APM meetings. We attended VE 80th celebrations which was quite a moving experience. We have also had full council meetings and have attended various training courses at the town hall.

There are considerable challenges with enforcement, in relation to their workload. On speaking with head of enforcement at a planning meeting he informed us that the 2.5 officers have 297 live cases they are dealing with. We have taken this up with the head of planning and a meeting of the enforcement task force will hopefully take place in the middle of June. One piece of good news: the Planning Manager has received authorisation to employ one more Enforcement officer.

People with disabilities will be pleased to know that the official opening of the Bexhill beach garden will take place on the 7th of June, with various acts taking place from 10.45 till 13.00 . With the ramp in place, it is an ideal spot for people in a wheelchair to enjoy the beach.

A verbal report will be given regarding any criminal actives within our Parishes once we have received them from our local PCSO'S.

Residents views sought on future of local government

Rother Residents are invited to take part in a consultation that will help reshape local government and how services are run in the future.

Government wants to reorganise local government so that everyone in East Sussex gets their services from just one council. This could mean the county council and district and borough councils would be replaced by a single authority.

Other options could also be considered if they attract wide public support and government backing.

With a new council expected to be elected in 2027 and start work in 2028, East Sussex County Council and district and borough councils are working on plans and are asking residents for their views.

Cllr Doug Oliver, Leader of Rother District Council, said: "Our aim is to get the best model that provides our residents and businesses with quality, value-for-money services. I hope people in Rother will now give us their views and help shape the future of local government in the county."

Cllr Keith Glazier, leader of East Sussex County Council said: "In response to Government plans we have worked with our colleagues in district and borough to

draw up an initial plan for a single local authority for East Sussex that could provide best quality and value for all its 550,000 residents.

“Final, detailed proposals will be submitted to Government in September, and we now need to hear the views of residents, businesses and other partners to ensure the plan we develop will deliver the greatest benefits to our communities.”

The consultation will be available to complete online at www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/EastSussexLGR/ from Monday, May 12 to Monday, June 23.

In the interim plan, the county council and the five district and borough councils have set out what they believe any new local authority would have to achieve including;

- Improving outcomes for residents and communities
- Making best use of resources now and for the future
- Enhance local democracy, local identity, transparency, accessibility, local decision making and accountability
- Support and drive decision making and public service reform at both Sussex and local level
- Provide a stronger and unified voice to help attract investment and tackle priorities

Ends.

Contact Information

Karen Bowles

01273 337291

07919 298427

karen.bowles@eastsussex.gov.uk

- **Indoor Activity Places**

Grant scheme to encourage more young people to be active this summer

A small grants scheme is being launched for sport groups or organisations working with young people in Rother that want to start a new activity or extend an activity they're running this summer.

To apply, we're initially asking for Expressions of Interest from sports groups and organisations interested in applying for a grant in the range of £200 to £500.

Successful applicants will need to show they'll use the grant to engage with young people who do very little physical activity, or don't play that sport. It's not to encourage people already attending sessions. The grant should be used to help support an activity or session to run weekly for 4 or 5 weeks between late July to the end of August

The scheme is being run through the Active Rother programme, in conjunction with Rother Sports Development.

The focus is particularly on those who are inactive or less likely to have opportunities to take part in sport.

Applications should link to priorities in the Active Rother Partnership strategy.

What areas and projects might be considered?

Successful projects will need to take place in the Rother District and target young people in the area.

In the past, multi-sports sessions, cricket and football schemes have been supported over the summer. However, we are open to other sports/activities being proposed.

The aim is to support a range of activities or extend current activities with the assistance of a grant for different ages across the district.

How to apply

After an expression of interest (EoI) has been submitted, a selection process will take place and successful applicants will be contacted and asked to provide further details.

An EoI would include:

- total grant required and any partnership funding they may have
- details such as how participants will be targeted
- details of safety procedures in place such as risk assessment
- safeguarding and insurance and details how the sessions will be monitored and evaluated.

A final decision on the awarding of grants will be made and communicated to recipients later in June.

It is recommended that any project submitted is discussed with town or parish councils and with the knowledge of District councillors.

The process for submitting an expression of interest is to send us in an email detailing responses to all the questions set out below.

Your responses should be sent to gettingrotheractive@rother.gov.uk by midnight on 1 June.

Expression of Interest Questions

1. Name of applicant, club or organisation
2. Email contact address
3. Where will your proposed activity take place?
4. What would you like funding for? (please include what the activity is, is it a new session or extension to an existing session and the proposed times)
5. How much grant funding are you seeking?
6. Why do you think your project will get more young people active? (particularly those who aren't active or who don't currently take part in sessions)
7. Why do you think people will come to your sessions and how will it be marketed?

Any queries, please send an email to Stuart.Ramsbottom@rother.gov.uk

Performance Report: Fourth Quarter 2024/25

1. At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22 January 2024, this Committee selected a set of measurements to shift performance monitoring back towards corporate operations and service delivery. It is important that Members remain assured that the various departments of the Council providing core services are functioning effectively, have sufficient resources and are delivering within expected parameters.
2. Members will receive an annual report on the state of the district. This report details the profile, demographic and housing and economic landscape of the district. Reporting by Exception
3. To focus on priorities, the narrative concerning performance against target will be by exception. This means a commentary from a Service Manager will be included when the performance is significantly above or below the target and to provide contextual information.
4. Corporate Core: Percentage (100%) of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests answered in 20 days
Performance is below target but moving in the right direction, with 90.9% answered within 20 days and 99.4% completed within 25 days. Further resilience has been put into this area to improve performance.
5. Customer Services: Channel shift online versus traditional methods – target 65% online.
The quarter 4 performance is 53.79% digital contact and 46.21% traditional contact. Channel shift to digital has remained static, averaging at 57% for the year. Progress has been slower than anticipated as customers are able to choose their preferred channel of contact. Recent developments with the “contact us” form, where artificial intelligence (AI) is used to assist customers with getting the information they need, will help keep contact to digital channels. Improved service functions will be delivered this year for complaints and FOI to aid with our improved digital offerings.
7. Estates: Income from all assets
The out-turn variance against the 2024/25 rental income budget is £156k deficit. The main deficit is driven by the rent reduction of two of our larger lessees, plus another larger lessee vacating. The further deterioration of the variance between quarter 3 and quarter 4 was a result of income received in connection to a surrender of a lease, treated as rent premium. This rent premium has now been split as a rent premium and dilapidations repairs (the dilapidations element of the income will be granted to the tenants in order for them to do the repairs).
8. Housing: Average number of weeks a household was in temporary accommodation (TA) before placement – target 15 weeks.

There has been an increase in the average weeks from the last quarter. The increase is due to several households successfully securing alternative accommodation who had been in TA for between one and two years. The KPI is sensitive to a quarter where several longstanding placements come to an end, as the measure is taken exclusively from those households whose placements have ended during the period. Staffing challenges have also affected the timeliness of decision making, meaning that households have remained in TA longer than they may have done otherwise. Overdue cases are now being prioritised, and we are funding an agency staff member from the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 12 weeks, to support with overdue decisions for households in TA.

9. Waste collections: missed bins per 100,000 – target 62

Performance continues to be excellent with only 8.5 recorded missed bin collections for quarter 4

Best regards,

Cllr. Tony Ganly & Cllr. Tony Biggs.