

NORTHERN ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT August 2026

Dear Clerks,

After our short break from our monthly meetings, in which we enjoyed a glorious summer (although we do need some rain now) we are about to start our meetings again. We have continued to engage with our residents over various issues that they encountered during the month of August.

With all the lovely hot weather, we did experience some difficulties with our water supplies. We have been in discussion with our ESCC Paul Redstone with regards to holding two meetings with SE water, one in Northiam and one in Staplecross if the village halls are available. We feel the residents of our Parishes should be given the opportunity to ask questions directly to the S.E. Water officers face to face. If we are successful in arranging a date, we will inform the clerks so they can pass on the information to their councillors and residents.

We attended an Overview and Scrutiny meeting in July as on the agenda was the Local Enforcement Plan. At the meeting it was felt that the rural areas needed to have an input, so the agenda item was deferred so that we can obtain that input. We also attended a meeting on the 27th of August of the Local Enforcement Task Group who are looking into the issue of Enforcement. At this meeting 12 points were raised from the feedback from parish councils, RALC, ESALC and individuals. Rother officers are going away to reassess the plan in the light of our suggestions and will submit an amended draft to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November.

We are waiting for our PCSO's reports so we will give a verbal update at the parish council meetings.

BEXHILL TOWN HALL

In July 2025, Cabinet considered a report on the Town Hall. The recommendations agreed were as follows:

£45,000 of the approved Temporary Accommodation (TA) budget be used to further investigate:

- a. the feasibility of converting 1 & 2 The Villas into residences for TA;
- b. the feasibility of new-build development on land at the rear of Town Hall, Amherst and former Autolec buildings for TA;
- c. Sale of available land at the rear of Town Hall, Amherst and former Autolec buildings for housing development, both for affordable housing (AH) and open market sales (OMS); and

Officers return with a formal proposal including budget, Business Plan, and initial concepts for further consideration by Cabinet.

This report now considers redevelopment options for land associated with the Town Hall site, including The Villas, Amherst Road car park, and the former Autolec site. The work concludes that there are several potential routes open to the Council, but most direct development options are financially challenging unless they are delivered as Temporary Accommodation (TA) and the financial benefit of TA cost avoidance is included. The most realistic immediate options appear to be taking no action, disposing of some or all the land, pursue a TA-led scheme or consider the site within the wider strategic housing land review being undertaken by Housing.

Following the July 2025 report, the Corporate Development Team (CDT) has worked with Housing and Estates teams to assess various options. This process initially prioritised options which maximised use of land, as larger development schemes are more efficient and avoid leaving compromised land. The maximum site is all the land associated with The Villas, Townhall, Amherst buildings, rear car park and the former Autolec site, having made allowance for access and infrastructure for retained buildings. All options assessed would retain the Townhall and Amherst buildings.

All options including The Villas are based on refurbishment and conversion to residential accommodation, rather than demolition and new build as this is more effective, both in terms of construction cost and number of residences generated.

MH Architects were commissioned to prepare potential site layouts to show how The Villas could be converted and the remaining site redeveloped, with 8 layout options for redevelopment have been prepared and were subsequently appraised using different tenure assumptions, giving a total of 14 appraisals, plus, two indicative Residual Land Valuations.

Having considered the financial appraisal, the current position of The Villas and the wider strategic uncertainty created by Local Government Reorganisation, the recommended course of action is to do nothing for now. This approach avoids disrupting recently established commercial lettings at The Villas, which are already generating income and have the potential to provide a steady ongoing revenue stream to the Council. It also avoids committing the Council to redevelopment or disposal decisions at a point when the future requirements of the Town Hall site under a new Unitary Authority remain unclear. Deferring action at this stage is therefore a prudent and proportionate response, allowing the Council to retain flexibility, protect existing income, and reconsider the site once there is greater certainty about future requirements under LGR.

The WEST STATION, BEXHILL

a Grade II Listed former railway refreshment room (later known as the West Station Pub) owned by the Council. In February 2025, the Council allocated £300,000

towards the project based on an initial, high-level estimate and the detailed officer appraisal and recommendations were attached at confidential Appendix 1 to the report.

The West Station building has been vacant since 2019 and has been deteriorating for several years, the extent of which had been identified by a condition survey in 2022 and further surveys commissioned in 2025, including roof surveys, measured surveys and drone inspections. Recent works had removed unsafe internal structures, and a Listed Building Consent application had been submitted for roof repairs to prevent further deterioration.

The options explored and the key issues for each option were reported as follows:

Option 1 – Do Nothing - the building would continue to deteriorate, and restoration costs would increase over time. The Council would retain ongoing health and safety and management liabilities, and this was not therefore considered a sustainable long-term solution.

Option 2 – Do Minimum (Temporary Repairs) - undertake temporary repairs to slow deterioration, although this would not solve the underlying issues and would likely only delay major works by around 2–3 years with future repair costs more expensive.

Option 3 – Repair Only - repair the structure but not fully restore it for occupation, which would leave the building incomplete and largely unusable, making future letting or occupation difficult; any future occupier would need to fund significant additional works.

Option 4 – Minimum Works and Disposal - carry out essential works to make the building safe and reduce further deterioration and then dispose of the property to a new owner. This option avoided the Council committing to a major refurbishment without a proven business case but would need careful marketing and selection of a purchaser capable of restoring and managing the building appropriately.

Cabinet acknowledged that the building was a recognised and valued heritage asset and refurbishment or re-use could contribute to heritage conservation, the regeneration of the Beeching Road area, local economic growth and climate objectives through re-use of an existing building rather than demolition and rebuilding.

It was agreed that continuing to leave the building vacant was not viable due to its worsening condition and Cabinet agreed the officer recommendation, which sought to secure a sustainable future for the building while balancing heritage, regeneration, financial and operational considerations.

It was resolved that Option 4 (minimum works and disposal) be approved.

Local Enforcement Plan

Is detailed in this Appendix A:

- [Appendix A , item OSC26/14.](#) PDF 106 KB [\(pdf\)](#)

Performance Report First Quarter 2026/27

Corporate Core C6: Channel shift – target 65% online

For the first time this target has been achieved with a quarter one performance of 76% of enquiries online.

Corporate Core CC1: 100% of Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs) answered within 20 days

Performance is excellent with 100% of FOIs and Subject Access Requests answered on time.

Estates: Income from all assets – expected income plus 2%

This is currently below target with the quarter one performance being 1% above expected income or £20,000 below target.

Housing: H1 – No. of households either prevented or relieved from homelessness.

Performance is excellent with 59 preventions or reliefs against a target of 30.

Housing: Average weeks a household is in temporary accommodation (TA)

This KPI represents the length of time a household spent in TA at the point that they leave. Several longstanding TA households have found accommodation this quarter, so the figure is higher than usual at 55 weeks compared with 40 weeks in the previous quarter.

Best regards,

Cllr. Tony Ganly & Cllr. Tony Biggs.