

## REPORT FROM CLLR JOHN BARNES, RDC – SEPTEMBER 23

- At the end of the first quarter, the spend at Rother was running £500k in excess of the budget, and little had been found of the £1 million financial stability savings needed to restrict the drawdown on reserves to the budgeted amount of just over £2 million. Cabinet decided that it could no longer rely on devolution of services to deliver financial stability savings, hence there was to be a fresh approach to finding those savings masterminded by the Performance Board. Income has improved, however, as a result of making better use of short-term lending.
- The Blackfriars project is being restructured to ensure its viability. That will mean a decrease in the amount of market housing and an increase in the affordable element. A new planning application will be submitted. In the meantime, the infrastructure cost which is the Council's responsibility is likely to reach £19.6 m., roughly double the estimate.
- All capital projects are on hold, pending review, and individual reports will be produced on how they are to be taken forward. Some may have to be delayed, but it is hoped that where housing is involved, developers can be persuaded to take them on.  
The number of homeless families is close on 2,000, but the number of emergency cases is far smaller, 193.  
Overview and Scrutiny have appointed a new Housing Task Force to study the problem and the housing strategy more generally.
- The Rye Harbour swimming pool has been re-opened, but quite what that means in hours has not been made clear.
- Planning enforcement is a concern and a review is in train. The last planning committee dealt with only one application, the proposal for what amounted to a holiday village at Normanhurst. The economic advantages if realised would have been substantial, but the damage to the AONB and indeed to a carefully planned estate was large. The Committee was therefore unanimous in turning the application down.
- Council on Monday appointed a new monitoring officer with considerable legal experience and two non-Council non-executives to the Housing Company Board.
- Finally, and closer to home, I have drawn the attention of the Planning Manager to the fact that the existing buildings at Park Pale, now subject to a fresh application, do not in any case conform to the planning permission granted.