

Rother Local Action Planning

Implementation Progress Report
1st March 2011



Initiated in 2005 Local Action Planning (managed under the auspices of the Rother Strategic Partnership and funded by Rother District Council) has sought to deliver a programme of support to local communities in Rother District in partnership with the local voluntary sector (Rother Voluntary Action). This support has enabled communities to develop and act on an agreed set of priorities for their community as set out in the form of a Local Action Plan (LAP). The intention of local action planning is to:

- Engage all communities in Rother in developing plans for local services and facilities
- Ensure that all members of a community including the traditionally excluded have opportunities and are encouraged to voice an opinion and be heard.
- Agree key issues and priorities for communities and engage with relevant service providers
- Identify themes and issues that run across the District that can be fed into the Rother Community Strategy and considered at a strategic level by the Rother Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- Develop and implement actions against those priorities in partnership with external agencies

As a result there are now 30 Local Action Plans in existence covering close to 99% of the population of Rother. As the programme has advanced communities have moved from the consultation to prioritisation and since 2010 there has been a stronger emphasis on implementation of the actions contained in the LAPs. These can range from very small local projects such as providing public benches through to working to secure major changes such as lowering speed limits or securing additional services from various agencies.

The Rother local action planning process has no end date. Rather it is about developing an enduring set of processes, principles and relationships that sees local communities working in partnership with external agencies, councils and other enabling organisations to secure meaningful and real improvement in their communities. It is the view of the Rother Strategic Partnership that this process is not merely desirable but essential and that communities should be enabled to take a strong role in leading positive change locally. Community Empowerment is about people and government, working together to make life better. It involves more people being able to influence decisions about their communities, and more

people taking responsibility for tackling local problems, rather than expecting others to. The LAP process encourages the development of three key ingredients to community empowerment:

- Active citizens: people with the motivation, skills and confidence to speak up for their communities and say what improvements are needed.
- Strengthened communities: community groups with the capability and resources to bring people together to work out shared solutions.
- Partnership with public bodies: public bodies willing and able to work as partners with local people

As a result of 5 years of support and development there is now increasing evidence locally to suggest that where the LAP process has been taken up communities have a much stronger sense of being able to drive and own changes than in communities where changes are still seen to be “imposed” or are the responsibility of “someone else” and as result have seen more improvements in their local community. This document highlights many of the key actions that are beginning to happen as a result.

Rother District Council and Rother Strategic Partnership are continuing support for the Local Action Planning process. If you have any enquiries about the LAP process in Rother please contact the Rother LSP Coordinator on 01424 878787

OUTPUT 1 Support for the implementation of village or community projects

	ACTION TAKEN			STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
Small local projects	Working with groups using their LAP to illustrate the need for these projects		Local projects include: § Rye Scouts § Udimore Village Hall § Broad Oak Recreation Ground § Crowhurst Village Hall § Bexhill Community Partnership § Bexhill Wheelers § Bexhill Environment Group § Bexhill Walking Heritage § Robertsbridge Cycle Track § Peasmarsh Memorial Hall rebuild § Pretious Sports Hall development § Tilling Green Centre development § Animate (securing future of) § Ewhurst Yoga § Bexhill Italian Food Festival § Bexhill Volunteering opportunities (VCES)	Helping groups use the LAP as a tool and evidence base Develop local service provision Support volunteer led initiatives
Active Amblings improving local walking opportunities	§ Workshop held 18 attendees from 12 parishes. § Individual parishes now moving forward and being supported with plans Additional needs identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promoting community activity ○ Local History 		The topics covered the health benefits of walking, training as a walk leader and the practicalities of planning walks; the way in which East Sussex County Council manage the extensive footpath network and how volunteers can become involved in this work. The afternoon progressed with ideas around	Improve physical activity rates Improve access to countryside

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tree preservation ○ Land owners obligations concerning footpaths ○ Maintaining footpaths ○ Rights of Way – in detail ○ Encouraging people to explore the local area ○ Encouraging young people to start walking ○ Linking with neighbouring parishes/volunteer groups <p>FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § PCT funding § Rye area Interreg bid 		<p>how promoting the footpaths walks could benefit the local economy by attracting visitors to our villages and closed with advice on recording downloadable audio guides.</p> <p>3 areas already undertaking work to develop new walks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Icklesham/Rye Harbour/Winchelsea Beach § Ticehurst § Guestling/Three Oaks/Pett <p>Links with RDC regarding tourism</p>		Support volunteer led initiatives
Village fitness classes providing local activities	<p>Working with Ewhurst/Staplecross to develop family yoga programme</p> <p>FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:</p> <p>PCT funding</p>		<p>Using yoga class in Staplecross as a pilot</p> <p>Need to look at use of community asset (ie school)</p> <p>Through PCT funding will support additional local projects. Working to see where support will help develop local new opportunities</p>		<p>Improve physical activity rates</p> <p>Develop local services and activities</p>
Developing Welcome packs for new residents	<p>RVA worked primarily with Mountfield PC to develop a welcome pack other parishes then signed up to the system</p> <p>RVA worked with RDC to supply new</p>		<p>This has developed to include 18 parishes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § 17 signed up for new occupier list § 12 inserts in Rother Welcome Pack 		Improve community cohesion

	occupiers list (addresses not names) RVA brokered and developed the processes and protocols and handed over to RDC		New occupiers list now to go out to Parishes directly via RDC once agreement letters are signed		
Provision of fresh fruit and veg locally	RVA has worked with the Community Fruit and Veg project to better enable them to deliver services in rural settings. Pilot work identified communities were struggling due to the commitment of volunteers. RVA is now proactively seeking solutions Pilot also identified problem with suppliers.		PCT funding to support development of this work identified to allow: Pilot in Staplecross. 2 other villages showing interest Working with struggling fruit and veg market in Brightling to make more sustainable. Engaged with East Sussex Volunteering Centre to work with Comm Fruit and Veg project to improve their marketing and support for volunteers		Develop local service provision Enable better health choices to be made
Provision of Traffic calming	RVA facilitated a Gateways workshop. Improved understanding of role of ESCC, costs and limitations of Gateway schemes. Ability to be used to develop a sense of place. Strong and good feedback. Additional needs identified: § Provision of rural public/community transport was.		§ 10 parishes participated 19 attendees § 2 have already had safety audits § 5 more in discussion with ESCC Applications can be made to RDC Community Fund		Reduction in speeding on rural roads Develop a sense of place
Improving youth activity provision in Bexhill	RVA has worked with BYPS, Bexhill Consortium, BCP, Victoria Hall to develop new services		Funding secured (£27,000 Bexhill Consortium, RDC, BYPS) local voluntary organisations engaged (BCP & BYPS). Work started December 2010.		Increased provision for young people

Lack of local identity/ events in Bexhill	RVA is working to support two events: existing Bexhill Music Festival (facing a number of barriers which they needed support to overcome) new Food Festival		RDC has engaged with this work. Concern of level of ongoing support from RVA that is needed		Sense of Community / Identity
Bexhill Town Centre improvements	RDC has initiated a working group to develop ideas.. Community groups and individuals have approached RVA concerning a lack of community involvement in the process.		RVA has raised the issue at Bexhill Town Forum Executive and District Councillors		Develop a sense of Place
Collection of bulky waste	RVA has kept in close contact with Rye Town Council about developments in area as it is a concern across Eastern Rother.		Working with HFS re Rye facility at Tilling Green Advertising Hastings Furniture Service Rye Town Council have taken this action forward		Improved recycling rates

OUTPUT 2 Identification and implementation of key strategic initiatives that agencies can implement

Improving physical activity rates	New LSP Active Communities group engaged with this work. PCT funding has been identified to support ongoing work.		PCT funded project to go forward from Phase IV work: active amblings, local fitness classes, healthy food.		Improving physical activity rates
Reducing speed through villages	10 communities engaged through workshop		7 villages in active discussion with ESCC to provide new gateways.		Reducing speed through villages
Increasing Youth activities provision	1 new service hub developed in central Bexhill RVA working with Animate regarding new funding bids		Local VCO's taking forward		Increasing Youth activities provision
Addressing lack of training & job opportunities	RVA is engaged with RDC, Hastings Bexhill Economic Alliance, SeaSpace on a strategic level RVA is a Partner in L-Earn project offering paid pre apprenticeship work placements to some of the most vulnerable RVA is supporting Tilling Green Centre to provide job readiness training for young people and long term unemployed RVA has formed a voluntary sector consortium to work with G4 on their Work programme.		Remains a priority for the area. Good partnership working amongst VCO's and with public sector.		Addressing lack of training & job opportunities

Encourage volunteering	<p>RVA works closely with the new Volunteer Centre East Sussex, with a local worked hosted by us.</p> <p>RVA has developed a new project to encourage volunteers</p>		<p>Encouraging new volunteers event planned for Bexhill in National Volunteer Week (1st June).</p> <p>Tudor Trust has funded this project over 3 years</p>	Encourage volunteering
Access to Transport in rural areas	RVA has been commissioned by East Sussex County Council to support Community Transport Operators to develop new local transport solutions in Rother		Explore issues with CT operators. Look at developing volunteer based transport solutions.	Access to Transport
Local police visibility	Sussex Police are looking for opportunities for using local community buildings to develop more localised services		Meetings with Sussex Police to discuss how this project could move forward in Rother.	Improved liaison with police and communities

OUTPUT 3 Embedding the LAP process

Attend Bexhill Town Forum meetings	RVA attends BTF Meetings		To continue to monitor actions which respond to LAP priorities		Embedding LAPs as part strategic planning processes
Provide as an when needed support to the BTF Exec Committee	RVA supports BTF Exec meetings.		BTF has expressed interest in reviewing the Bexhill LAP BTF Executive has been strengthened by new volunteers and is reviewing and strengthening its governance and procedures		
Attend RALC/ Parish Clerk meetings	RVA attends meetings and have agreed with chair of RALC that we will better support Parish Clerks in working on Local Action Plans and capacity to implement projects		Ongoing engagement. Working with RALC to deliver support to Parishes		
LAP refresh/RALC support	RVA distributed Questionnaire to all clerks to identify needs RVA agreed detailed briefing to new parish clerks who find taking LAP process forward quite daunting		Parishes interested in working on specific projects for which they are willing to precept Parishes have shown limited interest in undertaking full refresh but are interested in regularly reviewing		

OUTPUT 4 Identification of additional funding sources to support the implementation of community based projects

Active Amblings	RVA has received funding for a one year project to develop physical activities linked to needs identified through LAPs and linking to the Active Rother Programme and LSP subgroup.		£30,000		Increased funding provision within local area
Village Halls	Reaching Communities Capital Fund identified as opportunity.		RVA is supporting local communities in the rural areas in making bids to this fund.		
Provide funding support and training	Respond to need for funding workshop in western Rother Funding workshops arranged in liaison with Community Networks Sprong 2011.		Funding workshop held at Brightling on 13 th December		
BYPS Funding for Young People in Bexhill	RVA supported BYPS in making funding bids		£5K from Rother Community Grants £20K from Bexhill Consortium		
Pretious Project	RVA is supporting the employment of new staff		£23,000 (Lottery)		

Community Transport	RVA has successfully bid for a year's funding to support Community Transport Operators to develop new local transport solutions in Rother		£30,000		
Encouraging community volunteering	RVA has accessed 3 year funding from the Tudor Trust		£70,000		
Rother Community Grants	A number of local communities have successfully bid to the RDC grants scheme for initiatives highlighted in their LAP action plan.		Specific in plan: £1,000 Catsfield Village Hall £4,100 Iden Parish Council £ 500 Iden Village Sign £1,000 Pett Parish Council £ 1,000 Iden Old Hall In general in plan: £5,000 Bexhill Young Peoples Project £20,000 1 st Rye Scouts £5,000 Battle Memorial Hall		
Individual bids under development	RVA is a partner in a Rye Bay Interreg bid that links with Active Amblings RVA is a partner in the Tilling Green Centre project				