

# Rother Community Plan



# Making things better by working together

Tell us what you think...

[www.rother.gov.uk/LSP](http://www.rother.gov.uk/LSP)

## By working together we can succeed and make a difference locally...

...having consulted with you, the residents of Rother District, in our 'Tell us What You Think' campaign, we have now produced 'Making Things Better By Working Together.' This is a draft plan of action that, once finished, will make a real difference to the quality of our lives across the District...

Photo: Bexhill Observer



### WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

The Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on us to prepare a Community Plan and establish a Local Strategic Partnership. Community Plans enhance the quality of life in Towns and Villages and contribute to sustainable development in the UK through action to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area and its inhabitants.

The key components will be:

- a long-term vision for the area, focusing on the outcomes that are to be achieved
- an action plan identifying shorter-term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes
- a shared commitment to implement the action plan, and proposals for doing so
- arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, for periodically reviewing the community plan and for reporting progress to local communities

...many of the following priority actions involve a number of organisations to achieve change. Therefore, we have given ourselves a ten year period to bring about real improvements.

With you, we will endeavour to make Rother an even better place in which to live, be educated, work, visit and have fun. This is an exciting opportunity for everyone to play his or her part in the future of our area.

You have to feel that this is your plan and, together with our partners, Rother District Council will make sure that you are kept up to date with progress. We will keep asking you to tell us how well we are doing and whether we need to change our priorities, but most importantly, we want to keep you interested in playing your part in your future.

Together we can succeed and make a difference locally.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Graham Gubby  
Chairman of the Rother Local Strategic Partnership



**Our Vision: Rother will be a place where everyone can live together sustainably and residents are properly informed, consulted and involved as part of an effective local partnership that recognises and addresses the needs of everyone in our community.**

## HEALTH INEQUALITIES

### Why is this a priority?

Even in the richest countries, the better off live several years longer and have fewer illnesses than the poor. People's lifestyles and the conditions in which they live and work strongly influence their health and longevity. The government has set out an action plan for tackling poor health and improving the health of everyone in England, especially the worst off. It focuses on cancer, coronary heart disease/stroke and mental illness. Together, these account for more than 75% of all the people who die before the age of 75 years.

### Our ambition

To co-ordinate the actions of local organisations to improve health and reduce health inequalities within the population of Rother.

### Who will deliver on this?

Bexhill & Rother Health Improvement Partnership in partnership with relevant organisations.

### What we could deliver

- Accidents – to reduce the death rate from accidents by at least a fifth by 2010
- Cancer – to reduce the death rate from cancer by at least a fifth by 2010
- Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) – to reduce the death rate from CHD and stroke by at least two fifths by 2010
- Smoking – to reduce adult smoking in all social classes so that the overall rate falls from 28% (1996) to 26% by the year 2005 then to 24% or less by the year 2010

### What you can do

- Don't smoke
- Eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day
- Use high factor sunscreen whenever you are out in the sun
- Try to walk more – e.g. use the stairs, not the lift and park further away from work
- In the car, always wear your seat belt and ensure children use a properly fitted child car seat

*It is important that you get the correct treatment and quickly by the NHS. We also need shorter waiting lists for operations and scans – Local resident.*

## TRANSPORT

### Why is this a priority?

Because of its importance to the economy and environment in the area.

### Our ambition

- To provide safe and convenient places for walking and cycling (including lighting)
- To provide Safe Routes for walking to schools
- To reduce the speed of traffic in villages
- To press for improvements to the strategic rail and road networks
- To improve access to better public transport, especially for education and job opportunities and health services
- To join up bus, rail and community services wherever possible, to improve co-ordination and through ticketing
- To make car parking safe

### What we could deliver

- National and local programmes for investment in strategic routes
- Improved timetables between service providers
- Increased numbers of public passengers
- Public satisfaction surveys
- Appropriate speed limits or other speed control devices in villages
- Safe Routes to schools
- Job opportunities

### What you can do

- Drive safely and especially within speed limits in built up areas
- Work with the parishes to reduce speed in villages
- Work with the community action groups
- Respond to public consultation exercises
- Use local public transport

*The running of empty buses cannot be sustainable. Taxi vouchers for all should be considered. Public transport boards in bus shelters should be improved. Minibuses to link with trains and the hospital should be considered. Traffic calming, vehicles not keeping to 30mph speed limits, too many heavy lorries through villages and speeding in country lanes – Local resident.*

### Who will deliver on this?

East Sussex County Council in partnership with relevant organisations.

## JOB CREATION

### Why is this a priority?

- To encourage young people's aspirations to achieve and obtain employment locally
- To raise average earnings
- To raise the available skills base to meet employer's needs
- To contribute to a feeling of social inclusion and self worth
- To reduce unemployment

### Our ambition

To create an economic climate that will offer the opportunity for all to improve the quality of their life, health and lifestyle.

### Who will deliver on this?

Ten Sixty Six Enterprise in partnership with relevant organisations.

### What we could deliver

- Inward investment attracted to Rother
- Sites and Premises developed
- Enterprise grants awarded
- Number of skilled jobs created
- Number of employees trained

### What you can do

- Employers – ensure you train your staff, including yourself
- Create links between Business, the Community and Education for mutual benefit
- Seek to purchase locally wherever possible
- Consider your work/life balance
- Support local enterprise

*Wages are lower here than the national average, but there appears to be plenty of vacancies – Local resident.*

## EDUCATION

### Why is this a priority?

A fairly large proportion of respondents to the 'Tell Us What You Think' Consultation felt that standards in education need to be improved, particularly in English and Mathematics.

### Our ambition

To make life long learning a reality for everyone in the Rother area. In particular, to improve skills for life, school attainment, further education and community learning.

### Who will deliver on this?

East Sussex Learning Partnership, working with the public, private and voluntary sectors.

### What we could deliver

- To improve family learning opportunities including parenting skills
- To improve speaking, listening and social skills in Foundation Stage settings & Key Stage 1, and raise attainment in both stages
- To raise the attainment of all Key Stage 3 pupils in East Sussex schools by 2005

- To increase the numbers of learners in some key areas, specifically Construction, Caring, Hotel & Catering by 2010
- 100% of core adult education to be based in multi – agency community learning centres and 100% of specialist adult provision located within a 10-mile radius from learner by 2010
- 15% increase in adult participation and 15% increase in adult progression

### What you can do

- Help your child learn
- Make sure school children don't miss school
- Become a parent governor or join a Parent Teacher Association and become influential in shaping policy on education
- Log on at [www.learnirect.co.uk](http://www.learnirect.co.uk)
- Log on at [www.lifelonglearning.co.uk](http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk)

*Nothing is more important than a good education. What future is there for the many who now leave school unable to read and write. Further education is also very important – you learn something new every day. One needs to keep the brain cells active in later life, so evening classes are excellent – Local resident.*

## WASTE & RECYCLING

### Why is this a priority?

- Increasingly strict legislation (e.g. Waste Electrical Equipment directive)
- Shortage of Landfill capacity
- Environmental impacts

### Our ambition

Through the active participation of local communities, take steps that help meet the priorities. To increase public awareness of the issues, thereby encouraging planning authorities and funding agencies to invest in the solutions.

### Who will deliver on this?

Rother Environmental Group in partnership with relevant authorities, agencies and organisations.

### What we could deliver

- Well-attended exhibitions, debates, events that encourage public action and lead to support for public and private investment in solutions
- More local recycling facilities

- The planning and construction of local facilities to generate renewable energy and to handle recycled material (Materials Reclamation Facilities)

### What you can do

- Reduce the amount of waste you produce and choose goods with less packaging
- Re-use waste whenever possible (e.g. paper, plastic bottles, plastic bags etc.)
- Recycle plastics, cans, glass bottles & jars, newsprint & magazines at local recycling centres
- Compost green kitchen & garden waste at home
- When replacing household appliances, insist that the shop takes away the old one
- Use rechargeable batteries when possible
- Buy recycled products

*The problem should not rest with the householder on how to recycle and reduce waste – the main problem is with suppliers and the huge amount of packaging, particularly plastics that they use – Local resident.*



*The Partnership has identified important issues such as Social Inclusion, rural issues, older people and black and minority ethnic communities. All of the action groups will be considering these issues over the coming years.*



## COMMUNITY SAFETY

### Why is this a priority?

You have identified public safety as the most significant influence on the quality of life in Rother district.

### Our ambition

The Rother LSP will actively support the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership's efforts to reduce crime, disorderly behaviour and the fear of crime.

### Who will deliver on this?

Sussex Police in partnership with relevant organisations.

### What we could deliver

- Making our streets and public places safer
- Supporting Neighbourhood Watches and Victim

- Support in their work with victims of crime
- Tackling youth crime, particularly around anti-social behaviour and vandalism
- Develop safer villages in the rural areas and safer communities in Bexhill
- Introduce neighbourhood wardens

### What you can do

- Check your security and mark property
- Get involved with your community, neighbourhood watch and voluntary organisations
- Promote citizenship by working with young people and encourage youth activity

*We need more police on the beat getting to know people like they did years ago. I have lived here four months and have not seen one policeman on foot. When people are caught committing a crime, the sentence they are given should be served in full. More cameras are also needed in trouble spots – Local resident.*

## CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

### Why is this a priority?

Children and young people should be a high priority because:

- They are the future; the community's continuing prosperity will depend on their creativity, skills and willingness to contribute
- Services and facilities to support and help children and young people to realise their potential and make the transition to adulthood are in many cases, poor or non-existent
- Many young people feel marginalised and patronised by adults. They need to be engaged and consulted and be given the opportunity and encouraged to participate in wider community activity
- Disaffection among some young people can lead to anti-social behaviour and crime and an increased concern about community safety

### Our Ambition

Is to consult and engage children, young people and their families in the development of facilities and services which meet their needs, and enable all to participate in the wider community and realise their potential. In particular, we will seek to reduce disaffection and tackle the underlying social causes of crime and anti-social behaviour.

### Who will deliver on this?

Bexhill Community Partnership, in partnership with relevant organisations.

### What we could deliver

- Increase the number of young people seeing Rother as a good place to live, with high quality services for them

- Increase the number of young people well informed about services, finding access easy and feeling their views and needs are taken into account when planning services
- Increase to 80% the number of young people having access to high quality services delivered in a safe, warm, well equipped environment within a safe 30 minutes journey from home
- Reduce the number of young people leaving school without qualifications
- Reduce the number of young people affected by or participating in crime and anti-social behaviour

### What you can do

- Consult and engage young people and encourage them to become involved in wider community activities
- In consultation with children and young people, identify gaps in services and facilities
- Increase the community's awareness of the needs of children and young people and press for their needs to be given greater priority
- Press for an increase in resources devoted to the needs of children and young people by the statutory agencies
- Adults could volunteer to help organisations providing services and facilities for children and young people

*Local needs housing should be a priority, as should providing access to jobs through affordable public transport at times that fit with the working day. Buses that get you to Ashford, Hastings or Bexhill after 9am or not at all won't help young people get jobs or stay in the area – Local resident.*

## LEISURE & RECREATION

### Why is this a priority?

- Promotes healthy lifestyles and healthy living, both physical and mental
- Contributes to community cohesion, local identity and stronger communities
- Contributes to the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly addressing fear of crime through increased social activity outside the home
- Economic and regenerative impact of local recreation, tourism and the creative industries
- Contributes to protection of both the built and natural environment

### Our ambition

To develop and encourage implementation of a Rother wide strategy that enhances opportunity for local people to participate in a wide range of leisure and recreation activity.

### Who will deliver on this?

Rother District Council in partnership with relevant organisations.

### What we could deliver

- Refurbishment and improvement of facilities
- Increased volume of uptake of leisure and recreation provision
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- Economic impact of leisure activity
- Customer satisfaction surveys

### What you can do

- Swim and take part in water activities
- Enjoy the coast from Camber to Norman's Bay
- Enjoy the countryside for walking and cycling
- Join numerous sports clubs for fun or competition
- Use parks and recreation areas for activities from tennis to kite flying
- Use informal recreation and youth areas including outdoor basketball nets and skateboarding/BMX facilities

*Most of our leisure and recreational facilities are well away from our rural communities, requiring transport to get to them. There is a need to link up with buses – Local resident.*

## HOUSING

### Why is this a priority?

- Loss of at least 30 housing association homes per year through Right to Buy
- Clients registered in need of re-housing exceed 2,000 and is projected to increase further over the next five years
- Homelessness has increased in Rother by 214% during the last year
- The 'price/earnings' gap is continuing to increase – it is therefore impossible for first time buyers to buy a home if they are living on local wages
- Changes in Government funding to housing are creating even greater difficulties so far as provision of affordable housing is concerned, with the end of Local Authority Social Housing Grants and the move to regional government and regional distribution of funds set by the regional priorities – meaning that key growth areas will receive funding in place of local authorities like Rother
- Consultation with the Rother community raised this as a priority for it to be resolved

### Our ambition

Is to seek to meet the housing and support needs of our residents by increasing the provision of affordable accommodation in the Rother District.

### Who will deliver on this?

Rother Homes in partnership with relevant organisations.

### What we could deliver

- The revision of the current Empty Homes Strategy and agreement and funding to bring 20 empty or private sector homes back into use for renting to local people
- The development of initiatives that will enable local people on local incomes to access at least 35 owner-occupied or part-owned homes per year
- Development of new initiatives to enable the provision of homes for rent and sale
- The development of new initiatives to make the best use of the existing affordable housing stock

### What you can do

- Support initiatives that seek to meet local housing needs
- Identify suitable development sites in rural areas where there is an identified housing need
- Support applications for affordable housing where there is an identified housing need
- Raise awareness of local housing issues

*Before building new properties, existing run down buildings should be developed. Green field sites should not be considered (e.g. Bexhill College) – Local resident.*



The 'Tell Us What You Think' booklet was circulated to 10,000 households, with a further 6,000 being made available to libraries, schools, information centres, community centres and leisure centres to name a few. The following gives a breakdown of the key issues coming out of the consultation in terms of percentage of respondents:

- 64% of you said more visible/appropriately targeted policing was needed
- 61% had concerns with household/corporate waste disposal
- 56% had concerns with the availability of affordable/decent quality housing
- 55% said that leisure and recreational facilities were insufficient in the local area and difficult to access
- 53% said that bus services need to increase and improve
- 48% said that local job creation is required through supporting businesses
- 41% said we need improved transport systems
- 40% had concerns with access/choice in educational services
- 39% said that we need provision of more affordable recreational facilities, clubs and support services for young people
- 37% raised the issue of waiting times for GPs, operations and dentists



Over 65 people, representing organisations throughout the Rother District, joined together to discuss their vision for the area. The Community Forum will be an important annual event giving the community a chance to have its say in how we're progressing.

*'The discussions around the tables and the feedback demonstrated a keenness to get on and there seemed to be 100% acceptance of the idea and the potential of LSPs.'*

*The concept of LSPs is not easy to get across, but I think we were all brought up to date very well in terms of where Rother is and what could be done next.'*

Action in Rural Sussex

## TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

*The LSP needs to know that they have chosen the most important actions to pursue. Please let us know what you think.*

Write - **Rother District Council  
Policy & Performance Unit  
FREEPOST SEA 1217  
Town Hall  
Bexhill-on-Sea  
TN39 3BR**

Telephone - **01424 787864**

Fax - **01424 787861**

e-mail - **policy.performance@rother.gov.uk**  
or leave a note on our message board at:  
**www.rother.gov.uk/LSP**

*Once we have received your comments, a final plan will be published in May 2004. If you would like a copy, then please contact us.*

## ROLE OF THE BOARD

*To develop, implement and monitor a Community Plan for the Rother area that ensures sustainable and balanced improvements in its economic, social and environmental wellbeing, and plans for improvements in the quality of life of Rother communities.*



Bexhill and Rother  
Primary Care Trust

