

NORTHERN ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT January 2025

We attended a RALC meeting in January. Balfour Beatty attended and gave a briefing on their work on highways etc. We asked questions regarding their work, pointed out some of their shortcomings and they took this on board. The CEO of Rother was there along with some of her colleagues. The topic of car parks came up and she mentioned the response from the people of Northern Rother.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those residents who took the time to take part in the survey. There were over 800 !!!!! people who gave their views regarding the Doctors surgery car park and hopefully it has made RDC to think twice about charging for parking. The final decision will be made at full council at the end of the month.

PCSO'S Reports.

Northiam

9th – Report of the Scout Hut being broken into. Appears nothing stolen, but writing on the walls, furniture moved, and people had been smoking inside.

16th – A business in Coplands Lane had a container broken into and some electrical items were stolen. A padlock on a nearby field had been cut and it is believed this is how the suspects entered.

23rd – Quad bike stolen from a property in Beckley Road.

Staplecross.

23rd Outbuildings and a garage have been broken into; tools and equipment have been stolen.

Members' Allowances 2025-26 - The Independent Remuneration Panel's Review

The IRP met in November 2024 and their report recommended that the Council increases its Basic Allowance (BA) by 3%, the same level of award made to staff in September 2024. All Special Allowances (for the Leaders of political parties, chairmen of committees etc.) are paid as ratios of the BA so any increase to the BA will automatically be applied to the SRAs and Co-Optees' allowances.

The recommendations of the IRP will be considered by the full Council at its meeting in February and a decision made.

Enforcement of Environmental Offences

The Council's current three-year concessionary agreement with National Enforcement Solutions Ltd (NES) is due to expire in July 2025 and authority is sought to procure and enter into a new 5-year concessionary agreement for the period 2025-30.

NES Officers patrolled the district and issued fixed penalty notices (FPNs) in respect of environmental offences, most commonly that of littering of cigarette butts. Under the present agreement, 30% of FPN income is received by the Council which is used to pay for the removal of graffiti and waste. If the Council did not employ an enforcement company, then very limited enforcement would take place, and the condition of the streets was likely to deteriorate. The Council would be unable to provide this service in-house without significant financial investment in employment and IT, which was not a viable option at the current time.

Members had noted a marked improvement in the cleanliness of streets, particularly in Bexhill, due to the existing contract and thanked the officers and current contractors. It was noted that the number of FPNs issued for fly-tipping, which was mostly at recycling centres, had reduced as behavioural change had been brought about by the issuing of FPNs.

Cabinet agreed that the protection of the district's environment was enhanced by carrying out effective enforcement against all forms of pollution and agreed that a new concessionary agreement be sought. It was noted that the East Sussex Procurement Hub would advise on an appropriate termination clause (currently three months) because of any potential local government reorganisation.

RESOLVED: That the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to procure, and enter into, a concessionary agreement, as a closed quote with selected providers, or using a framework agreement, for the enforcement of environmental offences from 2025 to 2030.

Barnhorn Green NHS Development

Rother District Council (RDC) had originally acquired the land at Brooklands Road, Bexhill, in 2019 with the intention of undertaking a commercial revenue-generating development (light industrial and medical centre) and a budget of £10m (borrowing) was approved to obtain planning consents and construction. Both elements of the project (light industrial and medical centre) provided important facilities to the local area which accorded with the original outline consent for major development at the Barnhorn Green site.

Since the grant of Planning Permission, £5m of Levelling Up Partnership (LUP) Grant had also been secured towards delivery of the project, although the light industrial units had been assessed as not commercially viable at the current time.

The proposed arrangement was that the GP Partners of Old Town and Little Common Surgeries would relocate their Little Common Surgery operations to the new Barnhorn Green Medical Centre, once constructed, whilst retaining a GP Service at the Old Town Surgery. The GP Partners would continue to operate a twin-centre GP service from those two buildings; in time, the Little Common Surgery building would become redundant and be an asset of the Council. The proposed arrangements for the overall final scheme, which was now agreed in principle between all parties, was for RDC to enter into the following Agreements, simultaneously with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and GP Partners:

§ Freehold purchase of Old Town Surgery from the GP Partners.

§ Lease of Old Town Surgery to the GP Partners for 25 years.

§ Freehold purchase of Little Common Surgery from the GP Partners.

§ Lease of Little Common Surgery to the GP Partners for a short period – until the New Medical Centre was completed.

§ Agreement for Lease with/by the ICB committing (a) RDC to delivery of a new Medical Centre, and (b) ICB to enter a Lease for 25 years on pre-agreed terms, and (c) the ability for ICB to sub-let the building to GP Partners as they saw fit.

Once the Agreements were in place, RDC would arrange construction of the new Medical Centre, procured as a JCT Design and Build Construction Contract where a single contractor was responsible for the design and construction, which streamlined the process for time and cost efficiency whilst simplifying project management. It was noted that the NHS partners had good experience with Design and Build Construction Contracts and had written a performance specification for the construction.

Overall, the proposed arrangements would:

- ? Allow the project to proceed.
- ? Make use of £5m LUP within an acceptable timescale.

Cllr. Tony Ganly & Cllr. Tony Biggs.