

Report to: Rother Local Strategic Partnership (RLSP) Executive

Report from: Alison Spring, RLSP Co-Ordinator

Report Title: RLSP Conference de-Brief

Date: Wednesday, 17th July 2019

- Recommendation:**
- 1) RLSP Executive to agree 3 Priorities for 2019-2020:
 - a) Fuel poverty / renewables
 - b) Financial inclusion / food poverty
 - c) Staying well and safe / exploitation
 - 2) RLSP Executive to discuss and agree final version of proposed draft action plan (Appendix 1) for 2019-20
 - 3) RLSP Executive to agree responses to questions raised at conference (Appendix 2)
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1. Introduction

The Rother Local Strategic Partnership (RLSP) held its annual conference on 17 July 2019 at Bexhill Town Hall. The conference was well attended by partners across all sectors. A full list of attendees is attached at Appendix 3.

During 2018-19, the RLSP had focused on 3 vulnerable communities related priorities:

- a) tackling isolation and loneliness
- b) supporting places and spaces where vulnerable people can get help
- c) delivering solutions for rough sleepers

This year's conference focused on aspects of poverty within the community and heard presentations from:

- Kate Meakin and Louise Trenchard on fuel poverty / renewables
- Kelly Collette and Vanessa Biddiss on financial inclusion / food poverty
- Laurie Church on staying well and safe / exploitation

Discussion groups followed. A summary of these is provided in the next section of this report.

2. Conference Discussion

The conference was split into 3 discussion groups. Potential actions for the RLSP from each group are highlighted below:

Discussion group 1 – fuel poverty / renewables

- Support existing good practices and services in terms of the Warm Home checks
- Work with partner organisations to lobby for funding for existing housing stock in Rother to be brought up to standard in terms of heating and insulation
- Work with Rother's Planning service to insist on policy change by challenging developers to install cost effective energy efficient measures

Discussion group 2 – financial inclusion / food poverty

- Work with those participants who offered to set up a steering group to take forward the issues and concerns raised during discussions
- Strengthen partnerships locally by focusing on 2 or 3 key areas of social prescribing in Rother, particularly in areas of rural deprivation such as Rye
- Encourage local community and voluntary organisations/charities/agencies to sign up to the free East Sussex Community Information Service (ESCIS) database by uploading information about the services they offer

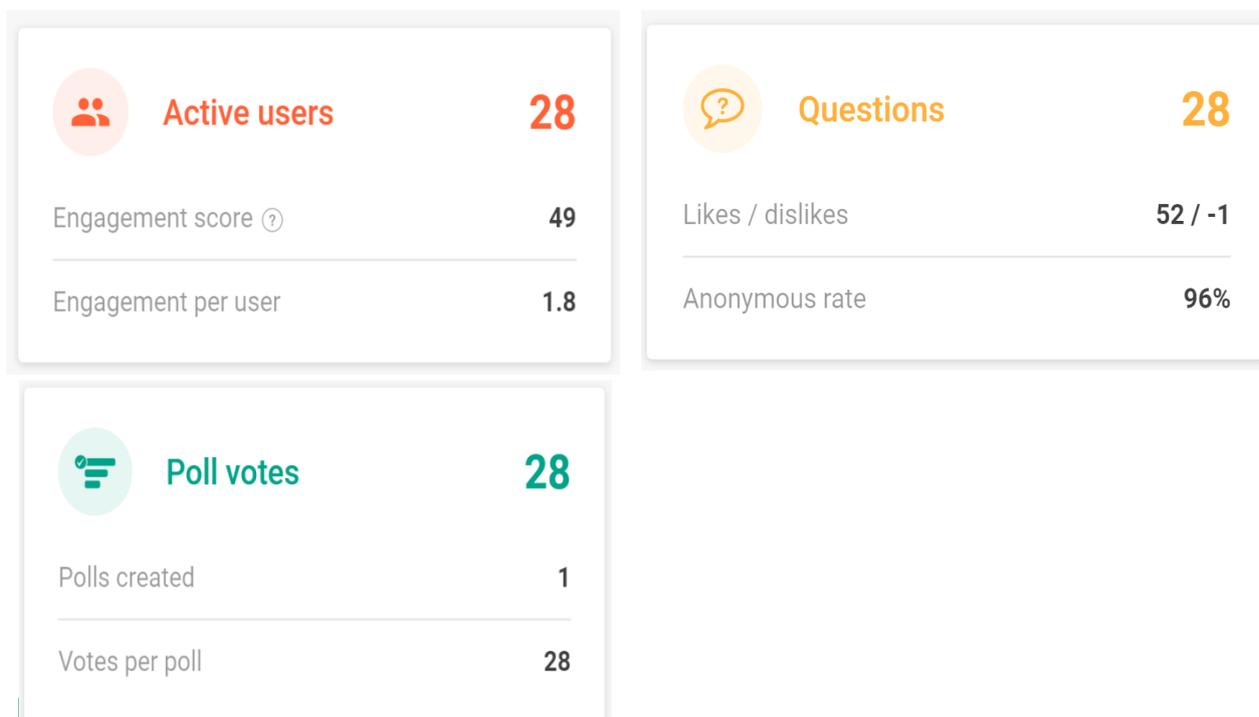
Discussion group 3 – staying well and safe / exploitation

- Encourage local community and voluntary organisations/charities/agencies to strengthen partnerships by joining the 'Community & Voluntary Sector Forum' which raises knowledge and builds relationships across communities
- Encourage the use of the free ESCIS database as outlined previously in group 2
- Encourage the use of respected methods of communication to make people aware of the types of scams in use – these should be weekly or Parish newsletters, RDC MyAlerts, police alerts, neighbourhood watch and so on

3. Sli-do Questions and Poll Results

Sli-do was used during the event to ask questions via a poll. A total of 24 questions were received and these are set out in Appendix 3. Analytic details are set out below. RLSP executive members will need to agree responses to these questions and where there are none, to forward these to the most appropriate agency for a response. All questions and answers are included in this report at Appendix 2.

Usage



How well would you rate your knowledge of the aspects of poverty?

Basic



Average



Strong



Social media was also actively used during the event. Twitter posts and retweets data are set out below:

- 18 total tweets sent with the #RLSP19
- 13 from @RDCconsult and 5 from other people/organisations
- 24 re-tweets on those 18 tweets
- 64 likes on those 18 tweets

4. Post-conference proposed draft Action Plan

A proposed draft action plan is attached at Appendix 1. This sets out a set of proposed priorities for 2019-20 with some examples as to how the RLSP might tackle each.

5. Conclusion

The RLSP conference provided all partners with the opportunity to have some input into decision making about the work of the RLSP over the coming year. A final proposed draft action plan will provide executive members with a clear work plan for delivery during 2019-20 and will include an element of awareness-raising to ensure stakeholders, including local MPs and residents are aware of the issues being tackled by RLSP organisations as part of an ongoing successful partnership.

Appendix 1



Rother Local Strategic Partnership Proposed Draft Action Plan (Version 2) 2019 – 2020 Aspects of Poverty

Priority	Action	Lead Agency	Partnership Resources required	Update
1. Fuel Poverty/ Renewables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the existing 'Warm Home Check Services', including the 'Winter Warm Campaign' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Sussex Fuel Poverty /Energy Partnership 	Richard Watson to liaise with Louise Trenchard and David Bishop for suitable lead	
2. Financial Inclusion/ food poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen partnership working locally by focusing on 2 or 3 key geographical areas in rural Rother in terms of delivering social prescribing Encourage local community and voluntary organisations to sign up to the free ESCIS database Resurrect conversation between Stagecoach and Bexhill Foodbank about free travel to Foodbank for residents in need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hastings & Rother CCG RVA Sussex Strategic Business Board 	Richard Watson to contact Carla Hawkins about rewording this action and identify deliverables Martin Fisher to liaise with Debbie Wilkins of the East Sussex Locality Teams Lord Brett McLean	
3. Staying Well and safe/exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the use of respected methods of communication to make people aware of the types of scams in use – Parish newsletters, RDC MyAlerts, Police Alerts, church leaflets etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sussex Police 		
4. Communications plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain momentum of social media aspect post-conference by reviewing the hashtag used at the conference for further questions and tweeting links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rother District Council 	Alison Spring to contact Rother DC communications team	

2.	How do we help those living in rural areas with fuel poverty?	Energise Sussex Coast has just received funding from UK Power Partners for our Energy Caravan service. This is an electric van with a pop-up energy advice service which means we can take our service right into the isolated, rural communities that need it. If anyone would like to book our energy caravan to come to their area then please email kate@energisesussexcoast.co.uk	Kate Meakin, Energise Sussex Coast
3.	What can we offer people unable to afford food other than the food bank, especially in rural areas?	<p>Food banks are the only source for accessing free food so we need to help and support people by taking a proactive approach to ensure they can afford essential items such as food.</p> <p>For Optivo residents, our Financial Inclusion Team provides help and support with budgeting to help ensure there is enough money to pay for food. We also run courses such as ‘cooking on a budget’ and we are working in partnership with Doms Food Mission where residents can bring along leftover food to cook into delicious recipes they can take away with them. We also advise residents of external agencies where they can go to for support – see response to question 7.</p>	Vanessa Biddiss and Kelly Collett, Optivo
4.	How will the actions from last year’s RLSP conference around housing help people in fuel poverty in targeted areas?	Fuel poverty has been noted and included in this year’s action plan.	Alison Spring, Rother District Council
5.	The Warm Homes fund sounds great but seems to rely on gas – what will happen when gas boilers are phased out?	<p>The Warm Homes Fund is primarily installation of First Time Central Heating in urban areas and works with the local Gas Network (SGN) as part of the Fuel Poverty National Extension scheme as part of their Ofgem obligation - this has been extended. The first stage of gas being phased out will be the installation of gas boilers in new build homes in 2025.</p> <p>Alongside this there are a number of longer term projects looking at rolling out community energy, energy companies and networks investing in renewable. Find out more about the SGN’s Hydrogen project here: https://sgn.co.uk/news/our-world-first-green-hydrogen-project-wins-uk-government-funding</p> <p>Also, keep an eye out for the Warmer Sussex energy whole house retrofit launch: https://retrofitworks.co.uk/warmersussex/ in October for the Able to Pay market for discussions at a national level around how to reduce the cost of renewable energy options at installation – they are currently very expensive. The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has recently closed its Fuel Poverty</p>	Louise Trenchard, East Sussex Fuel Poverty Coordinator

		Strategy consultation which included discussion on how to meet the Clean Growth Strategy targets.	
6.	What support can be given to renewable technology for rural areas where electric heating is often the only option other than oil?	<p>We would encourage anyone thinking about installing a new heating system to look at the options of renewable heat from air and ground source heat pumps. Although the upfront costs of ground and air source heating systems are high, the government provides a subsidy called the 'Renewable Heat Incentive' which guarantees the home owner a subsidy for 7 years.</p> <p>For example, a 2 bed detached house would spend around £6,400 installing the air source heat pump but would receive approximately £900 each year over 7 years in subsidies which effectively nearly covers the cost of the initial installation cost. For larger scale projects that are for the good of the community and incorporate multiple sites, then funding is available from the Rural Communities Energy Fund. RCEF provides support to rural communities in 2 stages: Stage 1: grants of up to £40,000 for a feasibility study for a renewable energy project; and Stage 2: grants of up to £100,000 for business development and planning of feasible schemes. For further information please visit: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-community-energy-fund Energise Sussex Coast is keen to work with rural communities interested in applying to this fund.</p>	Kate Meakin, Energise Sussex Coast
7.	Love the services for Optivo residents – what is available for private rented sector residents and those unable to access Optivo services for support as they are not residents. Where do they go for help?	<p>There are a number of voluntary and charitable organisations where people can go to for help: Citizens Advice Bureau Christians against Poverty HARC Step Change Homeworks STEPS</p>	Vanessa Biddiss and Kelly Collett, Optivo
8.	How do we get to help isolated rural people who are struggling and where do older people who often don't ask for help get help?	<p>All statutory services and social care services are required to respond to meet requirements. GP surgeries should be the first port of call. Also voluntary sector services encourage people to talk to neighbours but some residents may need encouragement to ask. The East Sussex Community Information Service (ESCIS) provides information on what services are available in the community.</p>	LSP Executive
9.	How can we link up initiatives like Helping Hands in Sidley with others?	See response to question 12.	Cllr Prochak, Rother District Council

10.	Is food poverty increasing in Rother?	Yes, food poverty has increased, especially child food poverty and the demand on Foodbanks has risen. Organisations such as the Lions Club work to provide support through fund-raising for people in need along with supermarkets who collect for the Foodbanks. Organised groups of volunteer workers also provide weekly food handouts to street people and the homeless.	LSP Executive
11.	How do you support a client who is being exploited but is unwilling or unable to recognise it in themselves?		Education / street navigators / key workers
12.	How do we get a Community Friends Group in every community?	<p>The successful Community Friends Group in Robertsbridge was set up as part of an RVA funded project in 2014 to establish Community Friends Groups in Parishes in rural Rother. There was a dedicated staff member who supported the set up by providing templates of policies, etc as well as help leafleting and creating a committee. A sum of £500 was used for each group.</p> <p>The funding for this ceased; however the Robertsbridge Group supported the set-up of other groups and this could be used to start other groups. Villages are a natural area for such schemes to work. In more urban areas, maybe 'villages' such as Little Common, Sidley and Old Town could form areas, maybe with churches as the community. The schemes require little ongoing funding to operate and can usually raise money easily once established as they are so valued by residents.</p> <p>Cllr Prochak is very happy to present the Robertsbridge Group 'Helping Hands', to any other interested groups.</p>	Cllr Prochak, Rother District Council
13.	Are we allowing developers or builders to still build non-zero carbon or inefficient homes? – if so then we are compounding the problem	<p>The UK's zero carbon homes policy was first announced in 2006, which set the target that by 2016 all new dwellings would produce zero net carbon emissions in terms of energy usage. This would be delivered by the provision of on-site renewable energy sources, including solar and wind electricity generation, etc and was to be enforced through the Building Regulations in coordination with the Code for Sustainable Homes.</p> <p>It should be noted that low carbon standards for housebuilding is very much determined by Building Regulations, and therefore planning policy only has a certain degree of influence in terms of how it can contribute towards these targets.</p> <p>In spite of climate change playing an increasing role on the Government's agenda, this target was abandoned in 2015.</p>	Nichola Watters, Rother District Council

		<p>Research by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors in 2016 indicated that the withdrawal of the 2016 target has indeed had a negative effect on local planning policy in terms of delivering low carbon homes. In addition to this, research by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) published in November 2016 found that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) viability test has had a significant negative effect on climate change mitigation policies, including those for sustainable homes.</p> <p>Rother's Development Plan includes policies to ensure that all developments meet prevailing energy standards, and encourage them to meet higher standards. There are also further policies which support proposals for low carbon and renewable energy schemes within the District. Whilst we do not currently have a policy that commits developers to build zero-carbon homes, this is a reflection of the national picture. However, local planning policy does what it can to encourage sustainable and energy efficient homes, by making these factors that way in favour of proposals. We are currently looking at the various tools available that can mitigate carbon emissions as part of new dwellings, as part of the Local Plan Review process.</p>	
14.	All very interesting but what are we actually going to do?	Identified in de-brief report – direct to website.	Alison Spring, Rother District Council
15.	The issue of hidden child food poverty needs to be looked at	Included in action plan.	Voluntary and community groups
16.	East Sussex County Council cutbacks on adult social care, where vulnerable people receive 20 hours per week care has now been severely cut to 3 hours per week – how will they fund additional care or pay for their fuel?		Social Services
17.	Have you mapped out strategic partners recently as a lot of the knowledge required to take action forward was present at the conference today?	Appropriate representation from all statutory and non-statutory organisations on LSP Executive and at annual conferences.	Alison Spring, Rother District Council

Appendix 3

List of attendees

First Name	Last Name	Organisation
Alison	Spring	Rother District Council
Amy	Fearn	Rother District Council
Ana	Messines	Rother Voluntary Action
Andrew	Crighton	The Snowflake Trust Ltd
Angela	Hatcher	NHS Hastings & Rother CCG
Angie	Smallwood	Sanctuary Supported Living
Anna	Cooley-Green	YMCA DownsLink Group
Beckie	Callaghan	Egerton House
Ben	Hook	Rother District Council
Brett	McLean	Sussex Strategic Business Board
Caroline	Castle	Southdown Housing
Cheryl	Poole	Rother District Council
CLlr Carl	Maynard	East Sussex County Council
CLlr Christine	Bayliss	Rother District Council
CLlr Doug	Oliver	Rother District Council
CLlr Paul	Courtel	Rother District Council
CLlr Sue	Prochak	Rother District Council
Craig	Harris	East Sussex County Council
Darrell	Gayle	East Sussex County Council Public Health
David	Gee	Bexhill Environment Group
Debbie	Peters	Rother District Council
Debbie	Wilkins	East Sussex County Council
Emma	Stone	Hastoe Group
Hilary	Painter	Rother District Citizens Advice
Jacqui	Skilton	East Sussex Recovery Alliance
Jan	Cutting	Rother Voluntary Action
Jane	Healey	Hastings Borough Council
Jill	Hardie	Bexhill Diabetic Group
Joanne	Wright	Rother District Council
Jonny (Insp)	Hartley	Sussex Police
Julie	King	East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service
Kate	Meakin	Energise East Sussex
Kathryn	Harlow	YMCA DownsLink Group
Katy	Croft	Rother Voluntary Action
Kelly	Collette	Optivo
Laurie	Church	Stop The Traffik
Linda	Seddon	Rother Race Action Forum
Liz	MacPherson	The Charter Centre (Bexhill)
Louise	Trenchard	Hastings Borough Council
Luke	Sanderson	Rother Voluntary Action
Malcolm	Johnston	Rother District Council
Marie	Kennedy	Rother District Council
Martin	Fisher	Rother Voluntary Action

Mary	Benton	Hastings & Rother Rainbow Alliance
Nicola	Mitchell	Rother District Council
Nick	Warren	Hastings & St Leonards Christians Against Poverty Debt Advice
Nicky	Cambridge	NHS Hastings & Rother CCG
Ollie	Jeffer	The Pelham CIO
Rebecca	Phillips	Southdown Housing
Richard	Parker-Harding	Rother District Council
Richard	Watson	NHS Hastings & Rother CCG
Ron	Sunderland	Rother Seniors Forum
Ros	Thomas	Christians Against Poverty
Simon	Treen	Brighton Housing Trust
Stephanie	Edmonds	Friends of Saint Nicholas
Tanya	Vice	Heart of Sidley Project
Teresa	Andrews	Hastings Advice & Representation Centre
Terry	Steeple	Rother Seniors Forum
Tony (Dr)	Leonard	Rother District Council
Tracy	Gain	Rother District Council
Vanessa	Biddiss	Optivo
Total: 61		