

**Report to Salehurst and Robertsbridge Parish Council**

Parish Council meeting 19 January 2026

From Cllr Susan Prochak (MBE) Rother District Councillor; Deputy Leader; Cabinet member

**Budget** The long-awaited settlement has now been incorporated into the Budget. A three-year settlement for the first time is welcome and Rother can deliver a balanced budget. The settlement is an increase of approximately £1 million, but reduces substantially in the following two years. However, there is still a need to use £1.181 million from reserves reducing reserves to £3.819million.

Band D is calculated at £216.95 which is an increase of £6.30. Note that this is for Rother and does not include the local precept, ESCC, Fire and Police. As expected fees and charges have increased by 3.8%.

The full report on the budget can be seen on the agenda for Overview and Scrutiny on 20 January.

**Local Government Reorganisation** Work is continuing on asset devolution with the main focus on Bexhill with its many assets to be devolved. The statutory consultation for the preferred unitary footprint finished on 11 January. Rother responded by supporting the One East Sussex proposal. It was noted that the Labour Group supported the Brighton and Hove proposal of five unitary authorities. The government is expected to make a decision in mid-March. Meanwhile we are waiting for a decision on whether the County elections will be cancelled. May 2027 will be the election of the shadow unitary authority, and the following year districts and boroughs will go.

**RALC Working Group** Rother Association of Local Councils chaired by Cllr Keith Robertson has set up a working group with the aim of producing a template for local town and parish councils to operate once Unitary Councils come into being. This group chaired by Martin Griffiths and supported by Rother has already done a great deal of work reaching out to other Districts and Unitary Authorities. I am pleased to be included in this work as the main concern from residents is the lack of connection and influence once unitaries are in place.

**Local Plan** The consultation on sites will officially begin on 26 January for eight weeks. There is likely to be great concern over the new sites suggested and Parish Councils are already planning to host meetings for their residents to see the proposals.

Government requirement for Rother was 912 new homes per annum. We have managed only 495 in the new Plan which is unsurprising given we have over 80% of protected landscape.

**Rother Enforcement Policy** A new Policy is being considered by Overview and Scrutiny before going to Cabinet. It is no surprise that our new Head of Planning is having to

address the backlog of cases. The 140 is now down to 95 and Mike Hughes, Head of Planning is confident it can be reduced to 50 by the end of March.

**Food Waste Collections.** All local authorities are required to introduce food waste collection for each household. Residents have had information ready for the roll out this spring.

**Medical Centre.** The proposals for the much-needed new medical centre behind Culverwells have been stalled for a very long time as the NHS would not agree on the finances. The costs have increased by 30% over 12 years. There has been much lobbying by all and we are grateful to our MP for raising the issue in the House. Rother have committed £1.2 million to this facility.

There are 16 new homes proposed with the centre which will have 6 consulting rooms and 5 community health spaces. 28 car parking spaces are planned.

**Rural crime:** With the increase of rural crime and farms and workshops targeted as well as increased fly tipping, we are working with the police to develop a way of dealing with this. It is early days, but we hope we can have positive news fairly soon.

**Other matters:** There are a huge range of issues Rother are dealing with day to day and the number of meetings we are required to attend is high, but these have been omitted to focus on the topics relevant to our Parish.

I am happy to answer any questions by email.

Many thanks

Sue Prochak  
Cllr.susan.prochak@rother.gov.uk