

Supporting Communities – A strategy to tackle deprivation and inequalities across Rushmoor

Executive Summary

Rushmoor is a generally affluent area and for most people it is a happy, healthy and safe place to live. However, despite its overall affluence, there are pockets of deprivation and some residents who do not have the same opportunities, hope or aspirations that others may have.

The unprecedented socio-economic crisis created by Covid-19, together with the global calls for justice, articulated by the Black Lives Matter anti-racism movement, have highlighted the extent to which inequality and discrimination persist within our communities. With its diverse population, Rushmoor recognises the need to build on our success and continue to support and integrate our diverse communities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused great disruption to people's lives and livelihoods. The health and economic impacts have fallen hard and often hardest on people who already face disadvantage. But, while the virus has presented major challenges, change and disruption, it has also given some new perspectives on what the future could look like, highlighted the strength of volunteers and local communities and reinforced the importance of working together.

The Council recognises that there are factors that affect deprivation and poverty that we cannot directly control but we know that strong, resilient communities can help to reduce inequalities, increase social connections and improve the well-being of our communities.

Supporting stronger communities is about collaborating with partners to tackle the inequalities and focus our collective efforts on the most deprived families and communities in the borough.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the approach to Rushmoor's ongoing commitment to tackle inequality and deprivation. It provides an overview of the priorities and proposed action seeking to address local challenges in order to build stronger, resilient communities.
- 1.2 Strong communities are those where people have pride in where they live, where they are confident, resilient and able to respond positively to the challenges that they face. There is a need to strengthen communities in order to improve health and wellbeing and address the disadvantage that impacts on the long-term life chances for residents in our deprived communities.
- 1.3 Whilst no single action or even a series of actions will eradicate deprivation and poverty, the Council recognises its role, to work with others, towards tackling the issues and addressing peoples' needs where we can.
- 1.4 The Strategy focuses on the improvements the Council and our Partners are prioritising in the next three years. It supports the Council Plan and the longer-term delivery of 'Your Future, Your Place' – a Vision for Aldershot and Farnborough 2030 which puts strong communities at its core with a strong emphasis on people and place.

- 1.5 Overall Objective:

To work with partners, to tackle the effects of poverty and deprivation, and to have a positive impact on people's daily lives.

- 1.6 Priority Themes

The priority themes have been informed by partner organisations, data sources, and the aspirations and ambitions of our communities:

Economic Hardship

To support people back into employment, raising skills and confidence

Young People

To raise aspirations - increase access to businesses and role models

To improve the participation of young people in education and employment through training

Physical and Mental Health

To support physical and mental health and wellbeing provision

To support the objective of Public Health England to increase life expectancy at birth by two years and reduce the gap in healthy life expectancy between the least and most deprived communities by three years

Connecting Communities

To increase levels of community engagement and specifically engage Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities

To reduce social isolation and loneliness

To support digital enablement

2. Background

2.1 The Council has worked with partners, over many years, to address the issue of deprivation in the Borough. The focus of the work has included:

- Neighbourhood Renewal Plans
- Rushmoor Strategic Partnership – priority to tackle deprivation in Mayfield, North Town and Heron Wood wards
- My North Town – to assist North Town regeneration
- Prospect Estate Big Local (PEBL) – targeted to Cherrywood ward
- Skills and Employment programme, Skilled up, Rushmoor Employment & Skills Zone (RESZ)
- Mental health support in schools
- Physical activity in schools to tackle obesity
- Cohesion strategy and action plan
- Local coordination of national Troubled Families programme

2.2 Historically, the Council has delivered some successful initiatives to tackle the pockets of entrenched deprivation and this has primarily focused on Cherrywood. Despite this good work, it is acknowledged that it has not significantly altered deprivation levels in terms of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data and we must recognise that, due to how the IMD is measured, it is unlikely to do so in the near future.

2.3 Addressing significant deprivation is difficult and long term. For many communities that have experienced deprivation for some time, the causes are complex and multi-faceted and making real progress remains extremely difficult.

2.4 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Data

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation identifies that Rushmoor has three small areas of deprivation, in the 20% most deprived wards in England for multiple deprivation. They are:

Part of Cherrywood ward

Part of Aldershot Park ward

Part of Wellington ward

2.5 In addition to these locations, the data highlights key 'functional areas' where relatively speaking, Rushmoor does not generally perform well. This is also supported by other data from sources including Frimley ICS Shared Care Records, Public Health England, Acorn – Well-being Segmentation, Hampshire County Council's Rushmoor Covid-19 District Report and Active Lives Survey May 2018/19.

2.6 Functional areas

There are significant deprivation levels across the Borough for: Income, Health inequalities - especially mental health, self-harm, obesity and for Education, skills and training.

- **Income:** In Rushmoor, 11.2% of children live in low-income families. Wellington & Aldershot Park have high rates of income deprivation affecting older people.
- **Health** - Poor health in general compared to many other boroughs in Hampshire, with particular high levels of mental health issues and depression, falls in older people and injuries resulting from self-harm.

Rushmoor has one of the highest levels of adult inactivity in Hampshire across its population (Active Lives Survey May 2018/19) and this is worsening. 71% of adults are categorised as overweight and we have above average levels of obesity in young people in Years R and 6.

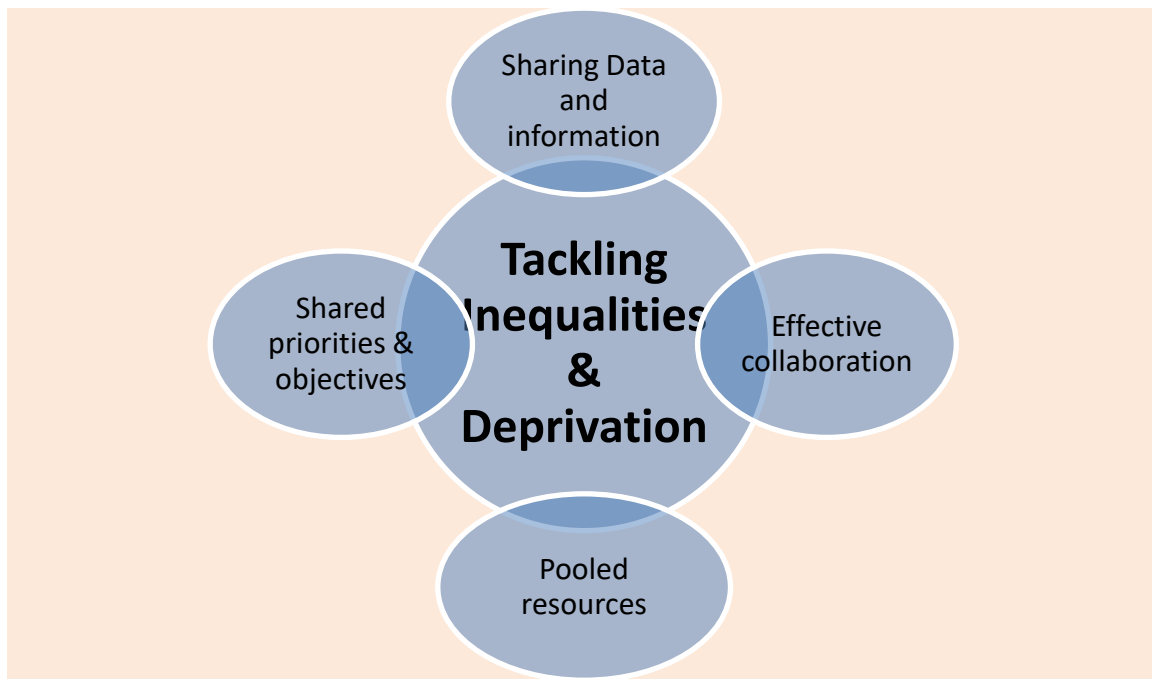
- **Education, Unemployment & Skills** – Rushmoor has high levels of unemployment – particularly for those between 18-24 years of age. These levels have been further damaged by Covid-19. Compared to Hampshire and the South East, Rushmoor has a higher percentage of residents with no qualifications.

Many of Rushmoor's primary schools are well below average for reading and writing levels and from our secondary schools three out of the four are below the Hampshire average.

3. Context

- 3.1 Partnership, collaboration and co-operation are the essential building blocks for tackling the inequalities and deprivation we know exist in the Borough. The commitment to tackling inequalities and deprivation and supporting stronger communities, is shared by partners and reflected in some of our mutual priorities and objectives.
- 3.2 We recognise that by having more honest conversations, understanding one another's priorities better and sharing data and resources, where possible, we can achieve more (Fig. 1).
- 3.3 The approach taken in preparing the strategy and action plan has taken account of:
 - Indices of Multiple Deprivation - the official measure of relative deprivation in local communities across England
 - Data, evidence and local insight and intelligence from partner organisations
 - Partner workshops to identify joint priorities and future joint working
 - The priorities in the Council Business Plan and specifically Strong communities – proud of our area
 - The views of Members, local organisations and some community leaders, who have suggested a range of possible initiatives and opportunities.
 - The views of RBC Service Managers
 - Impacts of Covid-19 and the results from the Council's Covid-19 Survey of residents
 - Healthier Communities Partnership Committee
 - The uncertainty regarding re-opening of Council-funded leisure centres
- 3.4 The document reflects the strong view of partners that local targeted action is the best approach to making a difference to people. It is supported by an action plan which details where effort will be focussed in the next two/three years ahead.

Fig. 1:



4. Covid-19 Impact

- 4.1 Covid-19 has highlighted, and in many cases exacerbated, existing inequalities across the Borough. Whilst much of the early commentary gave the impression that Covid-19 had no boundaries and was indiscriminate in who it affected, it has become increasingly clear that the impacts of the disease fall disproportionately on our most deprived communities and put a spotlight on the long-standing, entrenched health inequalities in the Borough.
- 4.2 Throughout the coronavirus pandemic the Council, alongside many partners, has worked hard to ensure that those most impacted by the crisis are able to access the support that they need, whether that be emergency food or medicine supplies, accommodation for rough sleepers, or digital support to enable people to stay connected.
- 4.3 A Community and Recovery Plan has addressed the immediate and urgent welfare response to supporting communities in the short term. This includes a particular focus on food and emergency provisions, but also engaging and understanding the impact on local communities better.
- 4.4 The plan includes an objective to facilitate the physical, mental and financial recovery of communities via the provision of appropriate, sustainable and community-based food initiatives. This includes developing longer term community led food provision such as community larders.

- 4.5 Some of the projects identified in this plan will complement the Community and Recovery Plan or, in some cases, continue the work that has been developed in response to Covid-19 to support stronger communities.

5. The Action Plan

- 5.1 The Action Plan has been developed with partners over the last nine months. It is a “live” document to acknowledge the rapidly changing situation and to ensure it is adaptable to changing needs.
- 5.2 It is based on the following:
- Place based – developing projects for specific locations based on need
 - Function based – for example mental health or aspiration projects developed across the borough
 - Empowering communities and enabling community led initiatives
 - Working together to achieve more with our available resources
- 5.3 The plan will be updated annually in the same way that the Council Business Plan is refreshed so that priorities are reflective of local issues and partner priorities.
- 5.4 The partner working group will monitor and evaluate the delivery of the action plan.

6. Targeted approach

- 6.1 It is crucial that we target our approach to the areas of greatest need, where we can engage the local community and make the biggest difference to residents with our limited resources.
- 6.2 Based on data, existing partnerships and priorities the action plan will initially focus on the following areas:
- Cherrywood ward – via PEBL-related projects expanding into other areas of the ward
 - Aldershot Park ward – focus on health projects
 - Wellington ward/Aldershot Town Centre – focus on income and debt, recognising the importance of supporting communities in the wider regeneration context
 - Tower Hill – focus on health and disability related projects
 - Borough wide – Income, employment, education and skills projects

- 6.3 Whilst there will be a particular emphasis on targeted projects in these areas it is not at the exclusion of others. There remains a significant amount of work being delivered through Borough wide programmes and as part of the annual refresh the needs and issues within other wards will be considered for future initiatives.

7. The Role of the Council

- 7.1 Deprived communities experience poorer mental health, higher rates of smoking and greater levels of obesity than the more affluent. They spend more years in ill health and have lower life expectancy. Reducing health inequalities is an economic and social challenge as well as a moral one.
- 7.2 The Council recognises it has a moral and legal duty to challenge barriers and promote equality of opportunity for all our residents and that is why it has developed a renewed approach to supporting stronger communities in conjunction with our partners.
- 7.3 In recognition of the intrinsic link between health and deprivation the Council is in the process of developing a joint post with the CCG to oversee the delivery of the physical and health priorities and reduce health inequalities.
- 7.4 The Council recognises that it needs to remove barriers to opportunity and close existing equality gaps. To support this, the Council will commit to review its existing Equality Plan by focusing on the following proposals:

As one of the borough's major employers: The Council should lead by example and is committed to cultivating a workplace where diverse backgrounds and perspectives are valued. The Council's People's Strategy will promote engagement in order to encourage a wider diversity in its employment profile.

As a Community Leader: The Council will challenge inequalities in every community. Council Ward Members actively lead the work in their wards, engaging with local communities and groups to identify opportunities.

Increased community engagement: Rushmoor is a diverse borough; a home to many different communities, interests and perspectives. An equal Borough must ensure that all voices are heard and represented, by taking active steps to engage, listen and learn, especially from those who have traditionally struggled to be heard.

- 7.5 The Council will explore different models for engaging with communities and learn from the success the Council had when engaging on the response to Covid-19 and issues around tackling climate change.

Supporting Communities – A plan to tackle deprivation and inequalities across Rushmoor

The plan identifies new activities developed and led by organisations in the Supporting Communities Partners Group. These are activities agreed to be needed by the group, additional to all the excellent work acknowledged as being carried out by authorities, organisations and community groups across the borough. Behind all the activities are separate plans with outcomes and success measures. Priority activities for each theme are highlighted in green.

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation / Partners
Young People - Resilience and Aspiration					
North Hampshire Youth Hub	Working with and providing for young people to improve their employability skills	Borough wide	Majority of funding from DWP £10K sought from Deprivation fund for IT and website	Feb 2021	Partnership between Rushmoor BC (RBC), Basingstoke & Deane DC and Hart DC
Kickstart Scheme	Fixed-term job placements for 16-24 year olds, offered by Rushmoor Borough Council, Citizens Advice, and other employers in the Borough	Borough wide	Government funded	Nov 2020	RBC / Citizens Advice and other local businesses
Kickstart Employability Courses	Training Providers: Community First (19-24) and Brockenhurst (16-24)	Borough wide	Funded	Late Jan - early Feb 2021	RBC
Open Doors Scheme	Virtual aspirational project showcasing careers and	Borough wide	TBC	March 2021	RBC / Rushmoor schools, Business, EM3

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation / Partners
	opportunities at RBC to school pupils				
(Rushmoor & Hart) Supporting Families Programme	Coordination of joined-up support by children and family professionals for newly identified vulnerable families	Borough wide with prominence in more deprived areas	Government funded	Nov 2020	Hampshire County Council (HCC) Family Support Service / RBC
Youth Council	Setting up a Rushmoor Youth Council to engage young people with local issues and decisions, including the development of a virtual platform for wider consultation	Borough wide	n/a	Feb 2021	RBC / Youth Forum
Aspirations workshop for 11-14 year olds	Workshops exploring ideas and encouraging confidence to fully engage within school by focusing on the young person's future plans –	Borough wide	Funded	Currently on hold due to Covid-19	HCC Children's Services (Rushmoor & Hart Family Support Service)
Targeted projects for young people	Free courses for Cooking with Confidence, Learn My Way, Numeracy & Literacy and Anger Management - all accessible to over 16 year olds	Borough wide	Funded	2021	Vine Centre
Mental and Physical Health					
Walking groups	Local walking group for residents to increase physical activity and social interaction	Aldershot Park	TBC	Jan 2021	Community Leaders supported by RBC / RVS

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation / Partners
Gardening club	Local gardening club	Aldershot Park	Ward member grant	Jan 2021	Aldershot FC Veterans
CCG Innovation Funding – Developing projects for Jan 2021	Small, innovative projects within local communities that could have a big impact on local health and well-being, capturing community energy and enthusiasm for real health benefits	Aldershot Park, Tower Hill, Cherrywood, Wellington	Funding to be applied for once projects identified	April-May 2021	Wider Supporting Communities group
Repair Café – Veterans Focus	Local repair café in Aldershot run by volunteers and veterans	Aldershot town centre	£15K funding from Covenant Trust	Feb 2021	RBC / Aldershot FC, Mike Jackson House
RVS Green Social Prescribing	Community gardening for people with mental health issues and from BAME communities, supported by Health and Wellbeing Support Workers	Borough wide	£9K funding secured from Energise Me	2021	Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS) with support from RBC / Primary Care Network (PCN) Social Prescribers
BAME Leadership Programme	Supporting BAME community groups in developing leadership skills and capacity	Borough wide	£28K fund secured through HIWCF		RVS as part of county-wide CVS led project
ORCA Befriending Support	Telephone befriending service to support isolated and lonely individuals across the borough	Borough wide	Funded	Nov 2020	RVS / Local volunteers
Mental Health Support	Supporting Rushmoor's case for a Mental Health Support	Borough wide	Funding to be acquired	March 2022	HCC Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation / Partners
	Teams (MHST) in Schools project based in the borough				(CAMHS) / RBC, Rushmoor schools
Hampshire Youth Access	Counselling, advice and support for children and young people across Hampshire	Borough wide	Funded		HCC
Mental Health Support	Specialist Mental Health workers supporting clients not currently engaged with Community Mental Health Recovery Services (CMHRS). Art Therapy is offered weekly	Borough wide with focus on targeted wards	Funded		The Vine Centre
Couch to 2k	Couch to 2k projects with primary schools' children to reduce obesity levels and encourage physical activity	Tower Hill	TBC	2021/2	RBC / Rushmoor schools
Parkrun and Junior parkrun	Continue to provide access to and promote local weekly parkruns and increase and broaden participation	Borough wide	N/A	As required	RBC
Economic Hardship					
Emergency Food / Free School Meals Provision	Emergency food provision, information and access to benefits support for families eligible for free school meals, alongside established Foodbank operators	Borough wide	£10K funded through Government grants and HCC	Nov/Dec 2020	RVS / RBC, HCC
Rushmoor Food Partnership	Community Store with food and essential items, plus	Aldershot initially, then	HCC food grant and	Jan 2021	RBC / RVS, Aldershot Town FC, Karuna Coffee, Park

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation / Partners
	access to support services as requested by clients and build resilience	Cherrywood once the Store has been established.	DEFRA funding to RBC		Church and other local support groups
Nepali Community Champions	Recruit, train and support Nepali Community Champions to identify those experiencing hardship, enable brief, appropriate interventions, and refer for full advice or other help where need is identified	Focus on Wellington	£20K for a 6-month project, adaptable depending on funding available	TBC	Citizens Advice (CA) /
Debt advice & support	Targeted promotion of community debt advice and support to encourage calls and referrals. Proactively supporting individuals with benefits, debt, housing and other economic hardship arising from Covid-19	Wellington Cherrywood Aldershot Park	Funded		CA
My Space	Providing face to face and telephone support to our most challenging unemployed residents, including benefits and 121 budgeting support	Borough wide	£12K from Supporting Communities pot for an additional year	March 2022	The Vine
PEBL Skills Café	Providing employment and budgeting supporting to residents	Cherrywood	Funded	On going	PEBL

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation / Partners
RBC Virtual Job Club	Delivering a virtual job club providing Rushmoor residents with an online education and support programme designed to help them find employment and training opportunities	Borough wide	£15K from deprivation pot - TBC	December 2021	RBC
General Employability Courses (19+)	Delivering short industry focused training linking job seekers directly with employers	Borough wide			The Vine / Hampshire, Community First and Brockenhurst College, community organisations and businesses
Connected communities					
Keep Well and Stay Connected	Reducing social isolation through increased digital opportunities	Aldershot Park	£40K Awaiting CCG funding decision	Feb 2021 if funded	RVS / RBC
CVS Digital Enablement	Supporting community groups to develop digital strategy and skills	Borough wide	£64K fund secured for CVS Network through HIWCF		RVS
Engagement with BAME communities and young people	Work with partner organisations, including faith groups targeting support work for BAME communities	Borough wide with Wellington focus	Community Cohesion		Youth Forum / Strength In Unity group
	Networking event with BAME groupings to ascertain	Borough wide	N/A	March 2021	RBC supported by the Cohesion forum

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation / Partners
	information about needs, capacity and barriers				
Reaching Out	Ensuring those most isolated or home-bound (particularly through age) are supported in their own homes.	Borough wide	Funded	Ongoing	Vine Centre / HCC Adult Services
Non-Themed / General work					
Engagement	Effective engagement with BAME and young people	Borough wide		2021	RBC via the Youth Forum, Cohesion Forum and Strength In Unity group
Men's Shed	Sites for pursuing practical interests to develop connections, showcase skills and encourage pride	Aldershot town centre, Aldershot Park	Pump priming funds		RBC / HCC
Funding	Identifying future funding streams to support deprivation work	Borough wide			RBC Community & Partnerships Team
Delivery	Identifying future delivery models to support deprivation work	Borough wide			RBC / RVS