

Supporting Communities – A plan 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 society. With its diverse population, Rushmoor recognises this.

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 local communities and reinforced the importance of working together.

We recognise that as a Council 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.

Through a more flexible and transparent collaboration with partners across all sectors, this strategy has been developed to maximise opportunities to ensure that all our communities can enhance their well-being and reduce the inequalities faced by residents in our most deprived parts of the Borough.

Introduction:

This report sets out the approach to Rushmoor's ongoing commitment to tackle inequality and deprivation. It provides an overview of the core objectives, priority themes and identified action for each priority.

Deprivation describes the lack of material benefits, such as a job, income, decent home and education, that are generally considered to be necessary in a society. Deprivation is also strongly linked to ill health – the social circumstances of the area in which you live have a massive impact on health and well-being and ultimately life chances.

No single action or even a series of actions will eradicate deprivation and poverty but we fully recognise that our role is to work towards tackling the issues and addressing peoples' needs where we can.

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.

The ambition for this strategy is grounded in reality. Put simply, it is about helping people in their daily lives in a way that makes things easier for them.

Core objectives of the Strategy:

- To support the objective of Public Health England to increase life expectancy at birth by 2 years and reduce the gap in healthy life expectancy between the least and most deprived communities by 3 years
- To raise aspirations and improve the participation of young people in education, employment and training.
- To increase levels of community engagement and specifically engage all sectors of the community more particularly those from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities
- To work in collaboration with partners - sharing information and insights and working together to fulfil mutual priorities

Each of these objectives contributes towards achieving some of the Council's corporate outcomes outlined in the Council Business Plan – people and partnership theme.

Background

The Journey so far

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 sessions to tackle obesity
- Cohesion strategy and action plan
- Local coordination of national Troubled Families programme

Whilst much good work has been delivered, 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.

Addressing significant deprivation is difficult and long term. 88% of neighbourhoods in the top 10% most deprived areas nationally were in a similar position four years ago. Complex and long-term deprivation across generations requires a heavy investment of resource and time through a multi-agency response to address needs. For many communities that have experienced deprivation for some time, the causes are complex and multi-faceted and making real progress remains extremely difficult.

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

In addition to these specific geographical 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

Functional areas

There are significant deprivation levels across the Borough for: Income affecting older people, Health – especially mental health, and 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.

Context

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.

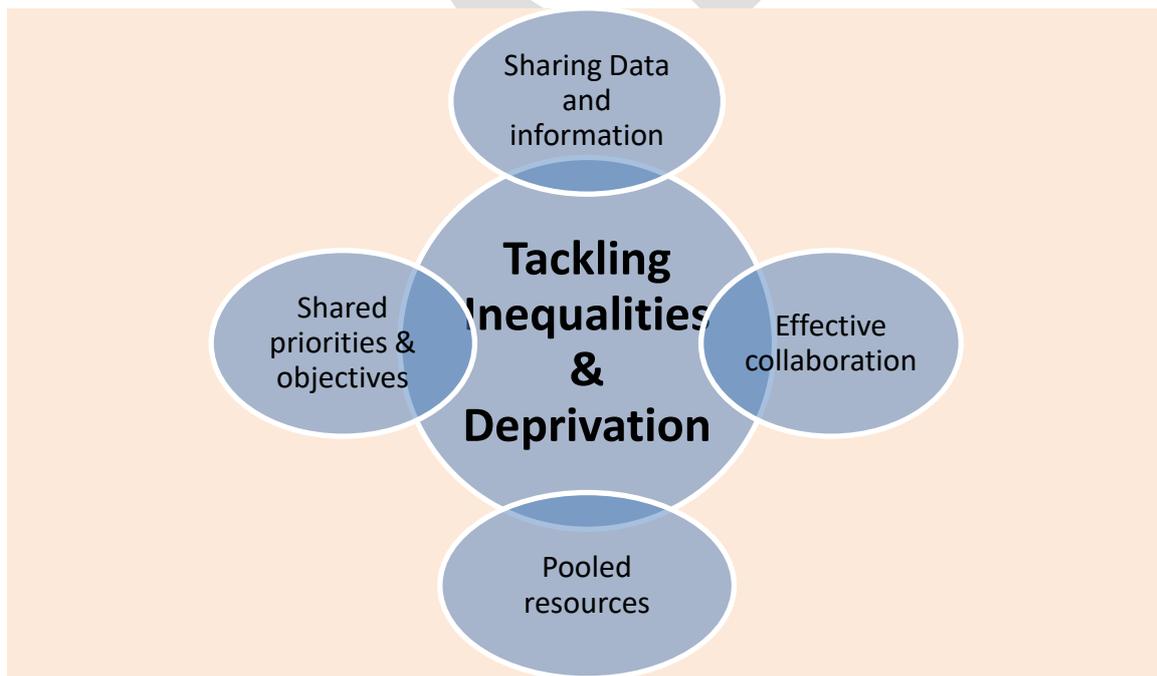
We recognise that by having more honest conversations, understanding one another's priorities better and sharing data and resources, where possible, we can achieve more. (Fig One)

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 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 One:



Covid-19 Impact

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 our black and ethnic minority communities and put a spotlight on the long-standing, entrenched health inequalities in the borough.

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.

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.

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.

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.

The Action Plan

The proposed Action Plan has been developed with partners over the last nine months. The plan is a “live” document to acknowledge the rapidly changing situation and to ensure it is adaptable to changing needs.

The plan reflects the priorities and objectives in the Council Plan - Your future, your place – a vision for Aldershot and Farnborough 2030 - which puts strong communities at its very core with a strong emphasis on people and place.

It is based on the following:

- Starting small and local

- Place based – some projects will be specifically developed and targeted at particular wards
- Other projects are more ‘function’ based (aspirations, mental health). They will be developed for borough wide participation
- Acknowledging diversity and building cohesion – increasing engagement with BAME communities
- Empowering communities and enabling community led initiatives
- Working together to achieve more with our available resources

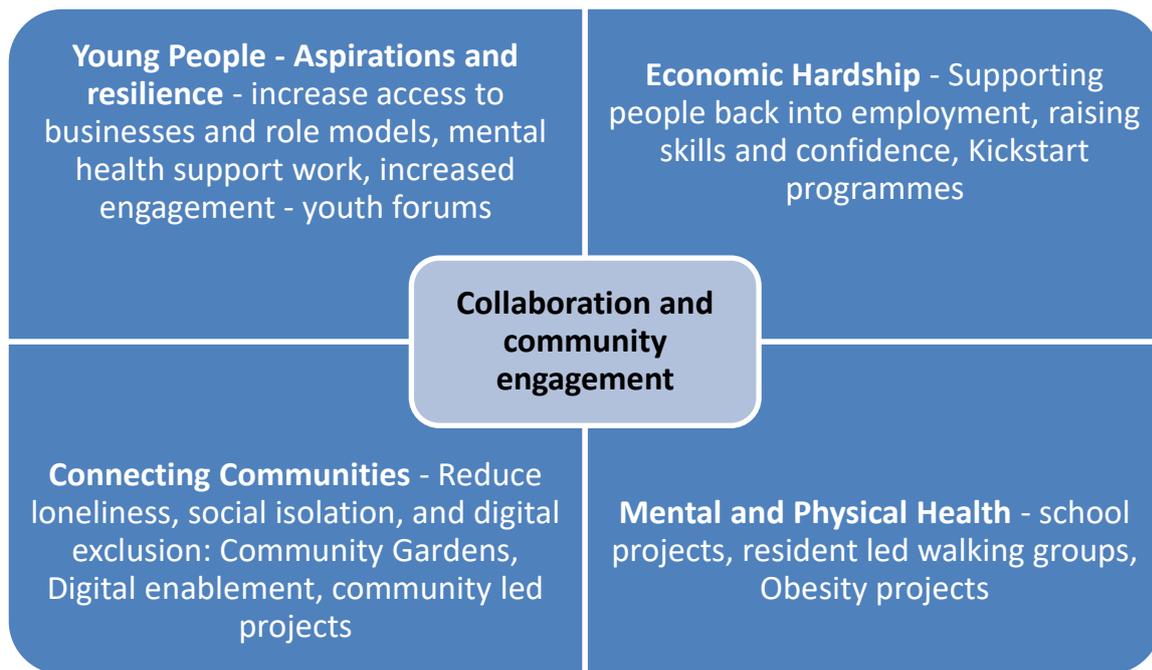
The plan will be updated annually in the same way that the Council Business Plan is refreshed so that priorities are reflective of local issues and partner priorities.

Priority themes - Supporting Strong Communities

In January and August 2020 a partner focus group met to review and compare data in order to develop a collaborative approach to tackling deprivation in the borough.

The following priorities were identified:

- **Young People - Resilience and Aspiration**
- **Mental and Physical Health**
- **Economic Hardship**
- **Connected communities (reducing isolation and digital connection)**



Targeted approach

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 local residents with our limited resources.

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 – and 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

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.

The Role of the Council

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.

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 – reducing inequalities strategy – in conjunction with our partners.

To deliver our renewed approach we recognise that we need to remove barriers to opportunity and closes existing equality gaps and so to support this, we will commit to review our existing Equality Plan by focusing on the following proposals.

As one of the borough's major employers: we want to lead by example. We will cultivate a workplace where diverse backgrounds and perspectives are valued.

As a Community Leader: we will challenge inequalities in every community. Our 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.

To do this, we 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.

The Council is committed to working with communities to properly understand the impacts and together, decide the immediate and longer-term measures needed to take to tackle inequality in all its forms in order to drive the best outcomes for the communities we serve.

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

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation/Partners
Young People - Resilience and Aspiration					
(Rushmoor & Hart) Supporting Families Programme	Coordination of joined-up support by children and family professionals with newly identified vulnerable families	Borough wide with prominence in more deprived areas	Government funded	Nov 2020	HCC Family Support Service, RBC
Kickstart Scheme	16-24 year olds Job opportunities offered by Rushmoor Borough Council, Citizens Advice, and other employers in the Borough	Borough wide	Government funded	Nov 2020	RBC, Citizens Advice & other local businesses
Open Doors Scheme	Virtual aspirational project – to showcase careers and opportunities at RBC to school pupils	Borough wide	TBC	March 2021	RBC Schools, Business, EM3
Virtual opinion groups	To develop virtual platforms to engage and consult young people	Borough wide	n/a	Jan 2021	RBC through the Youth Forum
Youth Council	To set up a Rushmoor Youth Council – to engage young people with local issues and decisions	Borough wide	n/a	Feb 2021	RBC through the Youth Forum

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation/Partners
North Hampshire Youth Hub	To work with young people to improve their employability skills	Borough wide	Majority of funding from DWP £10K sought from Deprivation fund for IT and website		Partnership between RBC, Basingstoke & Deane DC and Hart DC
Kickstart Employability Courses	Training Providers: Community First (19-24) and Brockenhurst (16-24)	Borough wide	Funded	Late January early February.	RBC
Targeted projects for young people	Cooking with Confidence, Learn My Way, Numeracy & Literacy and Anger Management - All accessible to those over 16	Borough wide	Funded	2021	Vine Centre
Mental and Physical Health					
RVS Green Social Prescribing	People with mental health issues and from BAME communities to be supported to engage in community gardening with support of Health and Well-being Support Workers.	Borough wide	£9K funding secured by RVS through Energise Me.		RVS with support from RBC
CVS BAME Leadership Programme	County-wide project being undertaken to support BAME community groups to develop leadership skills and capacity.	Borough wide	£28K fund secured for CVS Network		RVS

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation/Partners
			through HIWCF.		
ORCA Befriending Support	Telephone befriending service is supporting isolated and lonely individuals across the Borough	Borough wide	Funded	Nov 2020 – onwards	Local volunteers – coordinated by RVS
Repair Café – Veterans Focus	To set up a local repair café in Aldershot run by volunteers and veterans	Aldershot town centre	£15k funded from Covenant Trust	Feb 2021	RBC, Aldershot FC, Mike Jackson House
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
Gardening club	To establish a local gardening club	Aldershot Park	Ward member grant	Jan 2021	Aldershot FC Veterans
Mental Health Support	To further Rushmoor's case for a Mental Health Support Teams in Schools project based in the borough	Borough wide	Funding to be acquired	March 2021/2	RBC, HCC CAMHS, Rushmoor schools
Mental Health Support	Specialist Mental Health workers to support 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
CCG Innovation Funding – Developing	Funding aims to give the local community the opportunity to suggest small innovative projects that could have a big	Aldershot Park, Tower Hill,	Funding to be applied for once	April -May 2021	Wider tackling deprivation group

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation/Partners
projects for Jan 2021	impact on local health and well-being, capturing community energy and enthusiasm for real health benefits	Cherrywood, Wellington	projects identified		
Couch to 2k	Deliver couch to 2k projects with primary schools' children to reduce obesity levels and encourage physical activity	Tower Hill	TBC	2021/2	RBC
Parkrun and Junior Parkrun	Continue to promote local weekly parkruns and increase 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 to families eligible for free school meals.	Borough wide	£10K funded through Government grants and HCC	Nov/Dec 2020	RVS, RBC, HCC
Rushmoor Food Partnership	The Food Partnership is progressing a plan to achieve a Community Store in Aldershot	Aldershot initially, then Cherrywood once the Store has been established.	HCC food grant and DEFRA funding to RBC	Jan 2021	RVS, RBC, Aldershot Town FC and other local support groups
Debt advice & support	Targeted promotion of our service to the community, to	Wellington Cherrywood	Funded		CA

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation/Partners
	encourage calls and referrals. Proactively support individuals with benefits, debt, housing and other economic hardship arising from Covid-19.	Aldershot Park			
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 to recruit, train and support Nepali Community champions – adaptable depending on funding available	TBC	Citizens Advice
PEBL Skills Café	Provide employment and budgeting supporting to residents	Cherrywood	Funded	On going	PEBL
RBC Virtual Job Club	A proposal to deliver 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+)	Working with a range of partners, Hampshire, Community First and	Borough wide			The Vine and a range of community organisations and businesses

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation/Partners
	Brockenhurst College to deliver short industry focused training linking job seekers directly with employers.				
My Space - Providing face to face/ telephone support to our most challenging unemployed residents.	My Space and Skills Café help people access training and employment, supports individuals to apply for the most appropriate benefits & 121 budgeting support	Borough wide	£12K from deprivation pot ensuring continuation for an additional year	March 2022	The Vine
Connected communities					
CVS Digital Enablement	Supporting community groups to develop digital strategy and skills	Borough wide	£64K fund secured for CVS Network through HIWCF		RVS
Improved engagement with BAME communities and young people	Work with partner organisations, including faith groups, to target support work for BAME communities	Borough wide with Wellington focus	Community Cohesion		Youth Forum Strength In Unity group
	Hold a networking event with BAME groupings to ascertain information about needs, capacity and barriers	Borough Wide	N/A	March 2021	RBC – supported by the Cohesion forum

Project	Activity	Location	Funding	Timescales	Lead Organisation/Partners
Reducing loneliness and social isolation	Keep Well and Stay connected – NHS Charities bid to reduce social isolation through increased digital opportunities	Aldershot Park	£40K Awaiting CCG funding decision	Feb 2021 if funded	RVS & RBC
Reaching Out	Working with Adult Services to ensure those most isolated or home-bound (particularly through age) are supported in their own homes.	Borough Wide	Funded	On going	Vine Centre
Non-Themed / General work					
Engagement	To increase effective engagement with BAME and young people	Borough Wide		2021	RBC via the Youth Forum, cohesion forum and Strength In Unity group
Mens Shed	Provision of places to pursue 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