

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document provides some clues to answering the question: “Who does what in local government?”
- 1.2. It is provided as a useful note for residents about the demarcations that exist.
- 1.3. For up-to-date information see: <[www.rother.gov.uk/national-and-local-government/](http://www.rother.gov.uk/national-and-local-government/)>

## 2. Comparing the three layers of Local Government

Town Council	District Council	County Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cemeteries / closed churchyards</li> <li>• Bus shelters</li> <li>• Street lighting</li> <li>• Planning – as consultee only*</li> <li>• Playing fields</li> <li>• Allotments</li> <li>• Litter bins</li> <li>• Tourism development</li> </ul> <p>* If the Neighbourhood Plan is “made” (accepted) at referendum the policies have equal status with those of the RDC Local Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cemeteries &amp; crematoria</li> <li>• Local transport plans</li> <li>• Street lighting</li> <li>• Planning &amp; development control</li> <li>• Parks &amp; leisure centres</li> <li>• Housing &amp; homelessness</li> <li>• Refuse collection, recycling, street cleansing, food safety, public toilets, pest control</li> <li>• Electoral registration &amp; elections</li> <li>• Council Tax collection</li> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Tourism development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Highways &amp; public transport</li> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• Parks &amp; open spaces</li> <li>• Social services</li> <li>• Refuse disposal, recycling</li> <li>• Library &amp; information Service</li> <li>• Registration of births, marriages &amp; deaths</li> <li>• Trading Standards</li> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Tourism development</li> <li>• Community planning</li> </ul>

*continued...*

### 3. RDC public information article, dated: Spring 2013



# JUST WHAT IS IT THAT WE DO?

Recently we have had some members of the public contact us confused about what local government is/does. We thought we might help them and others by putting something in this magazine.

We don't expect you to sit an exam on it, but it might be helpful if you have an idea of exactly which councils and authorities do what – that way, if you ever have a question or a problem, you can direct it to the right place so it can be sorted quickly, instead of wasting your valuable time.

Understanding what local government does and delivers can be confusing – in fact, some professions even have dedicated 'public affairs' qualifications to help people remember what certain councils do, as it may be important in their jobs.

Rother District Council alone delivers a wide variety of over 60 services to its residents. It's very difficult to remember them all!

Local Government, in Rother at least, has three tiers. Although in other parts of the country big 'unitary' authorities exist that do almost everything, in this area there is no such thing as just 'the council'. There are different levels.

In the middle, there is Rother District Council – that's us! We collect your Council Tax, but less than 15 per cent of it is given back to us to spend on services. The rest is for other authorities and organisations.

#### WHAT WE DO INCLUDES;

- ✓ Waste and recycling collection
- ✓ Parks and gardens
- ✓ Sports pitches and leisure centres
- ✓ Tourism
- ✓ Economic regeneration projects
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Arranging Council Tax and housing benefit
- ✓ Checking the hygiene in restaurants and shops
- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Running elections
- ✓ Managing cemeteries
- ✓ Operating some public car parks
- ✓ Planning for emergencies and disasters
- ✓ Taxi and premises licensing
- ✓ Running some beaches

And lots more...  
A full list can be found at [www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk)

#### WHAT WE DON'T DO!

- ✗ We don't look after roads and pavements (trunk or 'A' roads and motorways are managed by the Highways Agency. All other public roads in Rother are the responsibility of East Sussex County Council).
- ✗ We also don't look after schools or social care.

East Sussex County Council, is the next level of local government. **What they do:** As we've already said, they manage a lot of the road network. They also look after schools, adult social care and health, libraries, street lighting, environmental issues, child care and children's services, trading standards, help the wider business and economic community and loads of other things.

The county council website is [www.eastsussex.gov.uk](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk)

Next is the parish and town councils. Although they have fewer powers compared to district and county councils, they are important organisations because they deal with people at the most local level. Their responsibilities can vary, but they often run recreation grounds, look after litter and dog bins, manage village halls and community venues, can decide some byelaws and must be consulted on certain planning matters. They are also consulted directly on many of the plans for the area Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council develop.

**IMPORTANT!** Just to complicate things, as funding for local government gets tighter the roles of the different councils may change. For example, parish councils could, in theory, run some car parks or allotments instead of Rother District Council. Some already do. When we pass a service on to a parish or town council, it is called 'devolvement'. However, the information here is a good general guide.

We hope this helps you to understand how local government works and, more importantly, guides you where to go if you ever need to talk to one of us.

6 [www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk)

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Revisions / Versions:	
Date	Item
2020-08-20	Initial Draft – for SG review/agreement. – v1.0
2020-08-21	Minor edits - v1.1
2020-08-28	1.3 web link added and 2. Town Council * edited – v1.2