

Rochdale Stronger Together: Briefing Sheet

Rochdale Stronger Together (RST) is an ambitious whole community approach to bring residents, local institutions and community businesses together to forge a good local economy and spread community wealth.

Rochdale Stronger Together is based on tried and tested *co-operative community wealth building* principles; successfully *tried and tested* across the world. They are designed to be tailored to a community's needs & *align fully with the Co-operative Party's [6 Steps Build to Community Wealth](#) – it's about investing in what a community already has to create local economic growth co-operatively:*

- jobs that people want,
- communities where people want to live
- services that people need,
- opportunities & skills for young people to aspire and achieve.

The initiative is apolitical and complements the physical and social regeneration work Rochdale Council is already doing. Amongst its achievements in 2018, RST:

- **Partners signed up to a pledge** - to act as anchors and to seek economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged residents and communities
- **Delivered two workshops** – to explore with partners how to:
 - employ more local people and pay the real living wage,
 - increase purchasing from local suppliers.
- **Established capacity by setting up four Workstreams with members from each Partner** – Buy Local, Learn Hire Local, Connect Local and Live Local
- **Completed a project with Manchester Business School** - to understand the economic opportunities in the Borough; identified £373M of construction related goods and services presently being imported into the Borough annually. This represents a huge opportunity for local suppliers. (Note evidence from Preston indicates for every £1M repatriated, 21 new jobs are created or secured).
- **Audited the spend of anchors** - to understand where the opportunities are for spending more with local suppliers. So far we have found (excluding the health sector), RST anchors combined spend is £203M. Only a quarter of that is currently being spent within the Borough. That means a possible additional £152M could be redirected and spent with local suppliers.
- **Auditing the number of local residents employed by anchors** - An audit is being conducted of how many anchor employees are Borough residents. Once the baseline is established, the aim will be to increase the percentage for each partner, year on year.

The initiative is led by a leadership group with representation from:

- Link4Life
- Rochdale Sixth Form College & Hopwood Hall
- Co-operative College
- the CCG and Northern Care Alliance
- RBH
- RBC & STAR Procurement
- Rochdale Borough Social Enterprise & Co-operative Forum
- A seat reserved for the replacement of Rochdale CVS

The Group has also **adopted the International Co-operative Alliance values and principles.**

Rochdale Stronger Together's vision aligns closely with a recent report which looked at how Rochdale Borough could reinvent Co-operation. In particular by:

- Building on existing strengths
- Develop, communicate and deliver a Co-operative future with residents and partners
- Make co-operative values explicit and communicate the co-operative difference
- Create a co-operative investment fund
- Increase the number of local contracts, local spend and local investment
- Provide new platforms to support private/social enterprise sectors
- Ensure co-operative principles are included in how services are delivered
- Support behaviour change towards self-responsibility and self-empowerment
- Provide a framework for elected members to engage with and support economic development.

Key objectives for 2019 include:

- **Agree and adopt shared principles** - for procuring with local suppliers and employing local people.
- **Researching and designing the Pioneers' Business Pathway and People Pathway** – For small businesses this is a comprehensive, seamless pathway bringing together the support, knowledge & experience local community businesses / entrepreneurs need to set up and scale. For the People's Pathway, this means to help residents go from being economically excluded all the way to employed in high skills jobs – the goal is a tailored approach for every step of the way.

Whilst much of the support organisations are already in place, the RST project will invite them to work collaboratively to provide a co-ordinated, accessible and unbroken pathway of support. Possibly integrating/complementing the hub already planned in the RSA/RBH New Pioneers Programme.

- **Increase the number of local residents employed by RST partners** – RBC has shown great leadership by committing to fill every position Grade 3 or below with a local resident where possible. The broader objective includes encouraging local employers to become living wage accredited and to consider becoming enterprise advisors as part of the [Bridge GM](#) programme.
- **Social Value Brokerage Model** - Devise a business model for RST to act as a social value broker; a streamlined process that develops social value packages of various sizes, ready to be picked off-the-shelf to fulfil social value elements of contracts. Brokering must deliver compliance with the Social Value Act; in spirit as well as words. The business model should make it easier for suppliers and public institutions to engage in meaningful delivery of social value.

To find out more about Rochdale Stronger Together or get involved, please see the contact details below.



For more about Rochdale Stronger Together@

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