

ROTHER VALLEY EAST AREA ASSEMBLY
held at Whiston Parish Hall, Whiston
on 14th April, 2003

Present:-

Stephanie Birch	Area Assembly Support Officer, RMBC
Councillor Georgina Boyes	Ward No. 21 (Thurcroft and Whiston)
Peter Bradbury	Whiston Resident
Councillor Jo Burton	Ward No. 14 (Maltby)
C. J. Eyre	Whiston Resident
Susan Green	Democratic Services Officer, RMBC
Martin Hughes	Area Officer, RMBC
Mrs. B. Johnson	Whiston Methodist Church
David Morton	Maltby Town Council
Mrs. P. A. Muffett	Whiston Parish Clerk
Ron Overton	Communities Against Drugs Co-ordinator
Duncan Armstrong-Payne	Regeneration and Planning, RMBC
Councillor Ron Pearson	Ward No. 21 (Thurcroft and Whiston)
Chris Purvis	Greystones Action Group
Councillor Glyn Robinson	Ward No. 14 (Maltby) – IN THE CHAIR
John Rotherham	Culture, Leisure and Lifelong Learning, RMBC
Councillor Amy Rushforth	Ward No. 14 (Maltby)
Chris Sissons	Community Planning Officer, RMBC
George Skinner	Whiston Parish Councillor
Mr. J. P. Ward	Whiston Resident
Ann Wood	Whiston Church

133. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Ray Sholl, Jan Lloyd and Councillor Nightingale.

134. GREEN SPACES BEST VALUE REVIEW/GREENSPACE ASSESSMENT

John Rotherham (Culture, Leisure and Lifelong Learning) and Duncan Armstrong-Payne (Regeneration and Planning) attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the above work, the purpose of which was to look at how RMBC managed green space and whether there are ways of improving the delivery of service and providing good value for money. The Government had suggested the Green Space Assessment in an effort to establish whether there is sufficient green space across the Borough.

Information was given on the following aspects of the work:-

- * What are green spaces?
- * What is Best Value?

- * How will Best Value be Achieved?
- * The 4 C's of Best Value
- * Cross Cutting Issues
- * Current Performance
- * Sustainable Development
- * Expenditure Per Head of Population
- * Key Issues
- * What Happens Next?
- * Areas of Green Space in Rotherham
- * How Rotherham compares with other Local Authorities
- * How well RMBC delivered on National priorities

The following information will be taken into account:-

- * National Guidance/Context/Priorities
- * Unitary Development Plan
- * MORI telephone survey
- * Urban Green Space Taskforce
- * UK Biodiversity Strategy
- * Rotherham Reachout Citizens Panel
- * Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy statistics
- * Planning Policy Guidance – PPG17 and Companion Guide
- * Staff Workshops
- * Focus Group Research
- * Views from Service Users/Questionnaire to under-represented groups
- * Best Value Performance Indicators

Key issues from the consultation were:-

- investment in facilities
- security and safety
- management and organisation
- communication with customers
- consultation and participation in the management of green spaces
- public transport
- provision of sufficient accessible and good quality green space
- increasing the use of green space
- provision of a competitive management service
- to establish ways of delivering/improving quality of life by providing green space service for disadvantaged communities

Cultural changes had also affected the level of public participation in green space management, with a great number of interest groups being formed.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the following questions were posed:-

- Is there enough green space in the Rother Valley East Assembly Area?
- If not, what additional green space did the Area Assembly require?
- How satisfied is the Area Assembly with the level of service they require?
- What improvements would the Area Assembly like to see?
- Should Rotherham Borough Council continue providing green space services?
- If not, should someone else be doing it?

The following questions/issues were raised by the Area Assembly and responded to:-

Councillor Pearson felt that if PPG17 had been in force some years ago, Whiston would have had more green space. Available land in Whiston was being used to its best advantage but there were no young play sites and nowhere to locate any. Thurcroft had lots of green space. The question was did they make the best use of it?

Councillor Pearson asked what the split was in terms of private contractors bidding to the Council to help provide the services for recreation and green spaces?

* It was a combination. Virtually all green space maintenance services were contracted out to Enterprise plc. All planning management and consultation work was carried out in-house. One of the criticisms arising from the consultation had been that the Local Authority did not address the needs of the 12-19 year old group. This was being looked at.

Councillor Boyes asked if there was anything about a heavily built-up area in the new guidance. For example, to demolish old houses in order to create space.

* This was a problem with older built up areas. The assessment will identify needs when making a planning decision. For example, if a planning application was submitted for four houses, the Local Authority would have evidence to show a particular need for a children's play area and could therefore write that requirement in as part of the PPG17 guidance. This included new build for business use. A need had to be demonstrated in order to access funding through planning decisions which is why the greenspace assessment is important.

How much of Rotherham's green space was Borough owned and private?

* This was not known. Rotherham provided 1800 hectares of green space (approximately 18 acres, or 7.3 hectares per 1000 head of population). This did not include private sector green space. This assessment was part of another exercise.

Where did church yards fit into the plan? It was agreed there was not enough land. The work talked of "clean and safe green spaces" and

yet Whiston church made a loss due to the Council charging to take away dead flowers. This was a cost to parishioners and yet it was a public service.

* The Council was looking at the whole of the green space service across the borough, church yards being a feature of that work, both private and local-authority owned. Concerns would be recorded but this was really a matter for Waste Management. Ultimately, responsibility for the maintenance of church yards could be passed to the Council once they were full. The Council managed 14 church yards that were formally "closed" sites.

Were school playing fields included in the land survey?

* Yes. The Council were looking at school playing fields both in terms of number and amount of green space. A separate piece of work had been commissioned to look at this aspect because there is an issue about schools having responsibility for the management of sites. The extent to which school playing fields are available for community use would be looked at in order to gain the optimum use.

In comparing Rotherham to other Local Authorities – were they the worst or best Authorities?

* Local Authorities used for comparison purposes were ones similar to Rotherham in terms of rural/urban mix and population size, and as recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

In terms of community planning, reference should be made to the Maltby Community Plan which mapped wildlife, ponds and playing areas. The work had largely been done by Friends of Maltby Parks and Groundwork Dearne Valley. There would also be an ILM scheme in Maltby and Thurcroft which Groundwork Dearne Valley were managing. Work was also being undertaken in Thurcroft. The Parish Council had a lot of information about this. Brampton en le Morthen has a Village Association and there was quite a lot of activity relevant to the size of the village. Whiston has formed a theme group looking at local recreation facilities.

* It was good to look at the borough-wide and localised approaches. This was very useful work which would inform the Review.

One resident referred to a Council booklet advertising open space events and pointed out that he had attended Whiston Manorial Barn last Thursday. However, the date had been altered and no-one had attended.

* Officers apologised and agreed to look into this matter.

In the March edition of Whiston Villager the Council had asked for interested people to contact them on countryside access. Someone had contacted the Council regarding footpaths and bridleways but had

received differing information about the timescale for applying. It was therefore questioned whether the work reflected a true consultation.

* It was accepted that people were sceptical about consultations. This was a Best Value Review and Green Space Assessment brought about by legislation.

How could Whiston residents capitalise on funding for country parks – particularly for the Barfield site in Whiston which there had been a scheme in place for about a year ago. On a recent Countryfile programme they had mentioned a figure of £3,000,000 for groups to access for local environmental initiatives. The programme had concentrated on school children who could be involved in such work. How could the Council help? It was recognised that people had to think about ways of accessing money which involved schools and communities to access a site within the community.

* Barfield initiative had now been running for two years, funded in part by Heritage Lottery Funding. Rotherham had been successful in delivering two major schemes with support from Libraries, Museums and Arts as well as countryside staff. The best way to access funding was for groups to be clear on the sort of project they wanted to implement. Jim Staveley, Countryside Officer employed by RMBC could assist. Another successful way of working was to establish a Friends of the Parks Group which were proving to be successful. One group had over one hundred members. Whiston may have similarly interested people.

Ann Wood commented on a successful initiative by Whiston Worrygoose School to build a wildlife garden.

A further comment was made about the audit. Why did the Council not know already who owned land? The UDP map should show all the urban green space. Also, if the Council had a general dissatisfaction from the public what were they going to do about it?

* The Council did know how much green space it had. The problem was that it was disseminated throughout the various Programme Areas and there was no central data base. That was another aspect which the Council would welcome help with. The UDP was another source but there was still some green space which was not recorded at all and no knowledge of its purpose. Such information was needed for a Public Inquiry for example.

John explained that 80% of people felt there was sufficient green space, which had also been confirmed by Area Assemblies. However, a strong message was that it ought to be managed better. There were still some small pockets of shortage, particularly in Whiston.

The Chairman referred to Maltby in particular where there was quite a lot of green space. However, there had been recent reports that some land was vandalised by children due to poor management. It was all about whose responsibility it was to manage good clean areas which

he felt was a major problem. More green space would cause more problems.

Martin Hughes commented that most of the recurring issues of his work, with the exception of Whiston, was that there was a lot of green space but it was about what that space was used for. There was a lack of facilities for children and young people in particular. Maltby had recently seen the success of the Friends Group of Coronation Park which was full of people every day. It was believed Thurcroft was the same. Another issue for Maltby was the areas of green space which people did not want facilities on. A further issue was the ongoing problem with motor cycle nuisance on green space. Various Agencies and the Local Authority were working together to tackle that, which he felt should be borne in mind when managing green space in the future.

Agreed:- That John Rotherham and Duncan Armstrong-Payne be thanked for their presentation.

135. PRESENTATION – COMMUNITIES AGAINST DRUGS

Ron Overton, Rotherham Crime Reduction Programme was welcomed to the meeting to report on a Community Against Drugs initiative. This was a three year Government programme whose aim was to address the drugs market, tackle drug-related crime and strengthen the communities.

Communities were now used to drug-related crime and there were people dealing, using and making money and profit, yet when someone reported an incident they felt victimised, vulnerable or even that it was a waste of time.

Ron had been in post for eight months. His role was to create the partnerships to involve communities. He had therefore been accessing groups of local partnerships and activities, talking to the Police, Area Assemblies and Housing to form a cohesive partnership in order to work on the problems that drugs caused in communities.

Drugs issues were around burglary, theft, robbery, anti-social behaviour, victimisation and threat of violence which created an air of vulnerability to a drug dealer. If communities did not report then Police statistics showed less and less drugs offences in an area. Therefore work was targetted in hot spot areas – for example Rawmarsh and Parkgate which were known centre points for the influx of drugs, predominantly heroin. This was also used with other forms of drugs and the habit must not be allowed to escalate out of control. A lot of users use crack cocaine and heroin at the same time with a significant difference in crack cocaine areas where there was more violent crime and communities changing dramatically overnight.

Ron's role was to work with communities who knew where it was happening and how to solve small sporadic problems. The Situational Crime Prevention Fund Initiative had been formed prior to Christmas to encourage communities to respond to problems in their area. There had been a total of twenty-seven applications. People who could come up with support to help the development of a community group were welcomed into the partnerships. One initiative had been funding to obtain window alarms (£4 each) fitted to old people's complexes. This small exercise created a feeling of safety.

Another initiative in Maltby was to improve the orange street lighting by changing it to white. Other initiatives had included demolition. By working with Local Authorities and Police and for less than £3,000, a problem could be eradicated. Other work covered needles, Hepatitis and HIV problems. These were good examples of community working together.

The purpose of the presentation was to draw attention to the work of Rotherham Drug Action Team in an initiative to form three services for drug users within Rother Valley and Wentworth, as reported at the last Area Assembly meeting. Presently Maltby and Rawmarsh had been chosen. The problem was finding a suitable venue in Maltby.

The only way to solve the problem was to treat people. The other aspect of the work, through Locality Service and CAD, was the education of children in schools. It was about reaching the children who would not listen. A project had been funded in Rawmarsh Comprehensive School building on crime data which was included in a full year's curriculum. Prison Wardens, Police, Probation Service, Criminal Justice representatives and young criminals came into school. The biggest impact had been when four offenders, all on drugs charges and users, had come into school to talk to Year 10 pupils. These youths were all working with professionals to help them come off drugs if they wanted to and had given a true picture of what it was like for them as a drug user and what they had lost in their lives. It was easier to come off drugs in prison due to the support available. However, it was then about support services outside. At least five schools now wanted to take part in this educational scheme.

This information would go all through Rotherham and all the people who are the next generation drug users. This work must access people at a very young age with information they understand and from people they could relate with.

The meeting discussed the following aspects:-

- targetting the appropriate age of children on drugs issues
- information to schools - dependent upon its strength - based on material which schools would allow

- children dealing, using and acting as couriers from as young as eight years of age
- offenders – two different strands - from rich and poor classes of society
- CADS Government initiative – to target a higher level of criminal strong communities did not tolerate the problem
- closed market dealt outside its own area
- details of a recent Business survey in Rawmarsh – 50% of crime associated with drug culture
- children in public places sniffing substances – poor police intervention
- anti-social behaviour – victimisation and bullying
- initiatives targetting shops and public houses

Ron could be contacted on ☎837330.

Resolved:- That Ron Overton be thanked for his presentation.

136. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th March 2003 be approved as a correct record.

137. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Local Transport Plan for Maltby

Martin Hughes had sought clarity on item 4 of the minutes from the Maltby Forum meeting. Phil Turnidge, Regeneration and Planning, had replied that he had almost completed summarising the 260 responses which had raised about 1200 separate points. His recollection of a comprehensive response from Maltby Environmental Group was a letter from Maltby Town Council about the Bypass and a number of individual respondents from Maltby residents. Phil had spoken with Alice Rodgers (Maltby Environmental Group) about the UDP process and community planning interface.

Phil was nearing the completion of a report on the outcome of issues/consultations including a broad summary of comments by topic. This will be reported to Members in April and then put on the website. Once this is set up Phil would acknowledge all respondents and inform them of the availability of the debriefing report. All comments will be taken into account in drawing up a draft replacement Plan to be available for further consultation in early 2004. In the meantime Phil and his colleagues could be contacted if any group had any particular concern.

(b) Supertram Proposals

Martin Hughes read out a letter sent to South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive on behalf of the Assembly in which he had enclosed extracts from the minutes of previous meetings held in Whiston, Thurcroft and Maltby when the proposed Supertram extensions had been discussed.

As a result, Martin had pointed out that this Assembly could not categorically state whether it was for or against the proposed Supertram extensions, merely reflect the opinion of those present.

(c) Feedback from Maltby Town Council

David Morton referred to negotiations to purchase the Methodist Church and was pleased to inform the Assembly that the deal had been successful in only a four weeks deadline, and that the building would be used for the benefit of the community. The building had been purchased from an underspend in the SRB6 programme.

This would be of enormous benefit to the people of Maltby and would not come out of Maltby's SRB allocation.

The one thing that had clinched the deal was the existence of a Community Plan in Maltby because the SRB team had been able to send a copy of the Plan on CD-rom which had prevented months of gathering together background information.

It was felt other communities should bear this in mind, and Rotherham MBC, by giving support to the community planning process.

Thanks were extended to the Chair of this Assembly for writing the preamble to the Community Plan in Maltby which had clearly been seen as a positive and comprehensive document.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the financial benefits, David further explained that the building had cost £120,000, which had automatically levered a further £200,000 worth of funding for refurbishment of the buildings and further revenue funding through the IDP process for the Maltby Community Development Trust. Therefore other work could come to fruition.

The Chair pointed out that a great deal of hard work had been carried out. He believed further financial benefits could yet be achieved.

(d) Ward Visits by the Leader and Chief Executive of RMBC

Martin referred to a copy of the minutes of the Ward 14 and Ward 21 visits held on the 25th February and 10th March respectively in the meeting's handout pack, together with a response from Economic and Development Services about some of the issues raised at those meetings.

138. CORRESPONDENCE

Martin Hughes reported receipt of the following items of correspondence:-

(a) Thurcroft – Community Development Worker

Following an enquiry from Ward 21 Ward Visits about the recruitment of a Community Development Worker for Thurcroft, enquiries had been made about this.

Teresa Brocklehurst, Voluntary Action Rotherham had replied stating that they had been unable to appoint to Thurcroft during the last round of recruitment but would be looking at this in the new financial year.

(b) Thurcroft Parish Council matter

Letter from Mrs. M. A. Masters (Parish Council member) on behalf of St. Simon and St. Jude Thurcroft, thanking the Assembly for a grant of £500. The money had been spent to purchase garden equipment. The letter had also thanked the congregation for their time and effort. The church garden now looked “blooming” lovely.

(c) Thurcroft Junior School

Letter from Ruth Blackburn, Head Teacher, on behalf of the year 6 children who had been thinking about the local environment in their literacy lessons and enclosing a letter from Alan and Michael expressing their ideas.

The children had written on behalf of the Thurcroft community. “We are writing to suggest the need for a park. Statistics state that a park for all ages would lower the effect of vandalism, graffiti and crime. Ideas have been brought up throughout the years in the village for a park to be built. We came up with many suggestions – a soft play area for under 5’s, an area for older children up to 13’s, a small skate park (fenced off), benches all around the park and gardens which will attract wildlife from all around. Furthermore, other people believe that it would be too costly and eventually get wrecked. We would therefore provide security for the park. The park would benefit its surroundings and be a landmark for Thurcroft community. In conclusion, the people of Thurcroft would enhance the making of this park so therefore the park should be built”.

Martin read out his response to the children following liaison with Alan West (Thurcroft Parish Council) and Father Paul Hunter. His letter referred to a number of ideas that could hopefully lead to more parks and play areas in and around Thurcroft. These included:-

1. Thurcroft Parish Council are working hard to raise funds in order to establish a play area for children and young people in the vicinity of the Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall. This has been a long process and has been frustrating for everyone involved but it was hoped all the money will be secured soon.
2. Father Paul Hunter has organised a new group called 'Thurcroft Young People's Partnership'. They are currently looking at ways of developing and creating facilities and activities for children and young people.
3. The Area Assembly team is just starting to help residents in Thurcroft develop a 'Community Plan'. This plan will provide a vision for Thurcroft and include the important priorities as identified by local residents. (A new leaflet explaining Thurcroft's Community Plan had been enclosed).

The children had been advised to contact Chris Sissons for further information.

Discussion took place regarding a way in which young children could be represented and involved in the Assembly process.

It was noted that this was a matter for schools' timetables and that meetings held during school hours would be difficult for children to attend.

Martin Hughes referred to other channels by which children could become involved and added that Maltby were presently setting up a Youth Forum. Father Paul was also responsible for a children and young people's group in Thurcroft.

(d) Community Skips

Letter from Martin Hughes sent to Thurcroft and Whiston Parish Councils and Greystones Action Group (Ward 21) and Community and Tenants and Residents Associations in Maltby (Ward 14) regarding arrangements for the allocation of community skips. The letter asked for a list of dates and locations to be sent to Martin by Friday, 25th April, 2003, the reason for this being due to demand. It was hoped to locate the skips in the community by early June. Booking Conditions and Responsibilities of Community Skip Organisers, together with further location details of the skips from Waste Management Unit had also been enclosed with the letters. Fifteen skips per ward would be allocated.

Councillor Pearson felt the Area Assembly was prolonging the process and asked whether requests could be approved more quickly in view of the timescales.

Martin Hughes explained that the Area Assembly usually endorsed requests and that therefore it was intended to report back to the next Assembly meeting.

However, to help the situation, Martin suggested it was easier with Thurcroft and Whiston working together with two Parish Councils, and the inclusion of Greystones Action Group in Whiston so if Ward 14 Members present today could agree the 8 skips to go to Thurcroft and the 7 to go to Whiston, with the endorsement of this Assembly, he could arrange this with Waste Management and the skips could be made available.

It was agreed:- (1) That the proposed list and siting of seven skips for Whiston, as submitted, be approved by Councillors Boyes and Pearson, and that eight skips be approved for Thurcroft, a list of sites yet to be submitted via the Area Assembly Officer, for forwarding to Ward 21 Members.

(2) That the skip allocation for Maltby, when submitted, be approved by the Ward 14 members on behalf of the Area Assembly.

(e) Recycling Facilities

Letter from Dale Otter, Sustainable Waste Services Officer, RMBC, on the Council's intention to expand 'bring' recycling facilities throughout the borough to enable the majority of householders easy access to a recycling site. This was part of the Council's commitment to increasing the amount of household waste recycled.

The letter informed that the Authority has been successful in obtaining substantial funding to support this scheme from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), National Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund.

The scheme will incorporate a network of recycling sites that will include banks for colour separated glass, paper, mixed steel and aluminium cans (5 banks in total). Recycling banks are available in different sizes according to requirements/suitability. Landscaping including hard standing and screening can be installed to lower the visual impact and provide a positive benefit to communities.

Residents were advised to discuss this matter within their Parish Council/community groups/assembly and identify possible sites in their area to be considered for new recycling bring-sites. Suitable locations will include car parks, playing fields, open spaces etc., accessible for members of the public and also by collection vehicles and cleaning operatives. Potential recycling site locations should be submitted to the Environmental Health office (Howard Building, College Lane, Rotherham) no later than 9th May, 2003.

All groups successful in applying for a new recycling bring-site will be asked to adopt the site and participate in the monitoring and control of the new facility by notifying the council of any emptying requirements or need for cleaning/maintenance.

As an incentive to participate in this new development, RMBC is launching a Recycling Credit Scheme that will award money to particular groups for each tonne of material collected. In addition, successful groups will be given a budget to help promote and advertise the new facilities; the Council's Waste Management Department will oversee spending.

Chris Purvis reported that Whiston was presently considering suitable sites.

Councillor Boyes felt further information on the advantages and disadvantages of recycling banks would be helpful, in order for groups to make informed choices. For example, how well was the bottle bank in Sitwell Car Park used?

It was agreed: That Martin Hughes liaise with Dale Otter and ask him to respond directly to the relevant Parish and Town Councils within this Assembly, and with the Greystones Action Group, on the issue raised by Councillor Boyes.

(f) Anti-social Behaviour

Martin Hughes referred to an Anti-Social Behaviour (Housing) Questionnaire (as contained in the meeting's handout pack) and to correspondence received from John Karanec, Scrutiny Adviser, RMBC. John was currently supporting a Member Working Group, set up by the Environment Scrutiny Panel, to consider anti-social behaviour from a housing management perspective. The Working Group will wish to examine current practice operated by the Authority for dealing with anti-social behaviour, the practices of other agencies e.g. Police, in examining good practice elsewhere.

It is the intention of the Working Group to contact Tenants and Residents Associations during the investigation.

The short questionnaire asked general questions on anti-social behaviour and how things could be improved, particularly that which affected people as tenants and residents.

John Karanec (Fax No. 822792) was in the process of writing a report. Any information could be forwarded to either John Karanec or Martin Hughes.

(g) Draft Rotherham Parking Strategy

Letter from Paul Gibson, Planning, Transportation and Tourism Service, RMBC regarding the production of a draft Parking Strategy to explain how parking in the Borough will be managed over the next five years or so. The draft strategy is now being circulated throughout the community, so that the Council can hear everyone's opinions. It is "draft" because the Council will only approve the final version when consultation is completed and any suitable amendments have been made.

The Strategy is necessary because national, regional and local transport policies seek greater sustainability, reduced car dependency and a greater role for public transport in the current transport hierarchy.

The strategy recognises that Rotherham has less parking than its neighbours and whilst it is committed to dealing with commuter parking by reducing commuter spaces by 5% per annum, it does not intend to reduce the supply of parking for visitors and shoppers.

The strategy suggests that parking offences should be 'decriminalised' and all non-endorsable parking offences would be administered under a streamlined version of the County Court rather than through the Magistrates Court.

A copy of the questionnaire was contained in the meeting's handout pack.

A full copy of the draft Parking Strategy was also available on request at the close of the meeting.

Councillor Pearson felt the enforcement of fixed penalty fines should be pursued, which he pointed out was not mentioned in the Strategy. He had written to the Police about this. Illegal parking was a particular problem in Thurcroft but no action was taken against it.

(h) Draft Countryside Traffic Management Strategy

Letter from Richard Newton, Transportation Planning Officer, RMBC enclosing the Borough's Draft Countryside Traffic Management Strategy which has recently been released for consultation.

The letter pointed out that the countryside is faced with a number of pressures that require effective policies and measures to help resolve them. This strategy sets out how RMBC will work towards improving public transport and conditions for cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders, motorcyclists and people with disabilities. It also considers issues surrounding vehicular traffic, economic regeneration and tourism.

Any comments or opinions were welcomed.

A copy of the Draft Strategy was available upon request at the close the meeting.

(i) IDP Site and Premises Appraisal Questionnaire (Maltby, Thurcroft and Hellaby)

Martin Hughes referred to information contained in the meeting's handout pack and explained there had recently been a Sites and Premises Consultation by GVA Grimley Consultants. The information summarised their findings so far and asked for completion of a questionnaire by residents to assess what areas they see as possible locations to develop community and economic business in Maltby and Thurcroft.

Residents were asked to return the information to the IDP office (Miners Welfare Hall, Thurcroft) or Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Thurcroft.

The Chairman referred to the consultation meeting held in Maltby at which he had been the only Maltby person in attendance. He felt the venue, title and timing of the meeting had borne no relevance to people whatsoever. Therefore the exercise had not received a proper informed decision. A similar meeting was to be held in Thurcroft.

Martin Hughes confirmed that similar comments had been fed back to the Consultants. The relevant information had since been sent out with the Assembly Newsletter in order to clarify the subject matter.

(j) Graffiti Hotspots

Martin Hughes referred to an item contained in the meeting's handout pack of a list of graffiti hotspots in Maltby and Whiston. None had been reported in Thurcroft.

The list was not extensive as the various groups had felt it was not a problem in their area.

This was a pleasing response which seemed to reflect that people are being educated and that the Local Authority are providing a reasonable service in the removal of graffiti at short notice.

The Chairman agreed that the situation was improving.

Councillor Pearson reported that Councillor Nightingale was presently involved in community clear up work in Thurcroft. He felt this was a further example of good community work through Parish Council funding, and a way of work being carried out quickly.

139. HANDOUTS

The handout pack available at the meeting included information on the following:-

- Rotherham Reachout Results for RVEast
- Area Assembly Team Report
- Future Agenda Items
- Anti-social Behaviour (Housing) Questionnaire
- Rotherham Draft Parking Strategy Questionnaire
- IDP Site and Premises Appraisal Questionnaire
- Notes from Ward Visits by the Leader and Chief Executive of RMBC
- Response from Economic and Development Services to issues raised at the Ward Visits
- Graffiti list – Rother Valley East
- Area Assembly Newsletter
- IDP Newsletter
- South Yorkshire Housing Association Security Grants
- Community Fund Workshop
- Free Training at Cedr
- Environmental Good Practice Day

140. ROTHERHAM REACHOUT SURVEY

Martin Hughes referred to the Findings from Rotherham Reachout's Fourth Survey of Panel Members concerning Rother Valley East, as contained in the meeting's handout pack.

In summary, a lot of the results concur with the borough-wide results. Points which were slightly different in this Assembly were highlighted as follows:-

- noise pollution is much higher than the total panel (6%)
- more than 9 out of 10 Rother Valley East residents deem improving the physical appearance of town centres and supporting the development of town centres as focal points important
- generally more satisfied with the Council's services than those from most other areas
- more respondents (24%) have made an appointment for urgent dental treatment in the last twelve months. This is by far the highest figure of the eight areas.
- less frequent users of Rotherham town centre car parks than average, with just under a third of panel members overall using car parks in Rotherham town centre once a week or more often

141. FEEDBACK FROM WHISTON PARISH COUNCIL

George Skinner reported on work undertaken by the Parish Council since the last meeting of the Assembly held in Whiston.

An anti-vandal seat and various signs had been installed on Cowrakes Lane.

Three Parish Councillors had attended the annual Association Conference held in Scarborough. Part of the workshop had covered Parish Finances, Community Planning, Virtual Villages and Rural Economy. Useful information had been brought back to the Parish Council.

The Leader and Chief Executive's visit to Whiston on the 10th March 2003 had covered the Community Development Plan and green issues and the Local Transport Plan. The Leader had assured the Parish Council there was nothing to worry about in Whiston regarding green belt and that the Pleasley Road bus lane had been resolved. The Local Transport Plan had been discussed. Reassuring answers had also been given regarding Services for the Elderly.

A table top event was to be held in the Parish Hall on the 26th April, 2003. A table could be booked for £5 and funds were being raised for various Charities.

The Village Garden Programme was under way and a village garden competition would be held later in the year.

Reference was made to recent reports in the press regarding a resolution from this Assembly in support of supertram. This included Maltby Town Council allegedly supporting the plan. The Chairman was asked to clarify this.

Councillor Robinson clarified that no such resolution had been made by this Assembly or Maltby Town Council and explained that the particular press release had misconstrued the story. There had been three separate discussions in this assembly. Whiston's assembly meeting had been a large number of people who had come to force their particular views on others. Maltby had specifically asked to put their views forward and have them recorded. The Chairman had allowed them to discuss the matter but not as a main agenda item. The majority of the people from Maltby at that meeting were more in favour of supertram but the meeting was not felt to have truly represented Maltby's views. Maltby residents had really wanted SYPTE to consider the implications for Maltby if plans were to include the tram going there, and for their views to be part of the proper consultation. However, SYPTE were still only talking of supertram going to the Hellaby site.

Martin Hughes referred to the information sent to South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (as referred to in the previous Minute No. 137 (b)) summarising the views of this Assembly at the three meetings held in Whiston, Thurcroft and Maltby.

George Skinner felt this clarified the position.

142. AREA ASSEMBLY TEAM REPORT

Chris Sissons gave an update on the following aspects of work:-

Whiston Community Plan

The Whiston Community Conference had taken place on 15th February at the Parish Hall. Approximately 40 people, including 4 officers, had attended. Copies of charts from the conference are available on request.

The Play and Recreation Group has organised between 10 and 12 focus group meetings with Tony Richardson the consultant from the Jigsaw Partnership. These are still taking place. The work should be completed during a final meeting with Tony shortly after Easter.

The Transport and Mobility Group is still in discussion with Highways and will also soon be meeting with various groups about mobility issues.

The Community Plan Steering Group met recently and discussed writing up of the plan. The two existing groups should be ready to write up after Easter and so there should be a plan ready by the end of the Summer.

Thurcroft Community Plan

Meeting to set up a Steering Group to be held on 8th May, 2003 at 7.00 p.m. at the Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall.

Rotherham Community Strategy

This document had now been published. Copies would shortly be circulated.

A short video on the community strategy was also available, the early part of which had some very attractive footage of Whiston in its promotion of Rotherham.

Martin Hughes reported on the following aspects:-

Rother Valley East Area Plan

The final version of the Area Plan is now awaiting approval politically in Rotherham MBC. It is envisaged that the priorities indicated in the plan will form the basis of much of the Area Assembly's activity over the next 12 months. The Plan will probably be endorsed by Rotherham MBC in May/June.

Support Officer Vacancy

There is still no indication that the vacant Support Officer post is to be re-advertised. Discussions are ongoing at a political and senior management level about this and other issues concerning the future of Area Assemblies.

143. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Martin Hughes referred to the following topics awaiting discussion, as follows:-

- Street Pride
- Local Transport Plan update
- Corporate Plan
- Annual Library Plan
- Crime on Public Transport
- Work with Adult Offenders
- Spoken History Project

It was agreed that the Street Pride Presentation, Thurcroft Landfill Liaison and feedback from Thurcroft Parish Council should take place at the next meeting to be held in Thurcroft.

144. MEMBERS COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FUND

Councillor Pearson reported on the above Scheme which had provided every Member with £1,000 to be spent in their community. Due to the money having to be spent by March, Ward 21 Members had written to and selected a total of 12 groups who had all received £250.00 each.

Councillor Robinson reported that Ward 21 Members had chosen to carry the money over into the next financial year.

145. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Monday, 12th May, 2003 at the Christian Fellowship Hall, Thurcroft.