

ROTHER VALLEY EAST AREA ASSEMBLY
held at the Thurcroft Christian Fellowship Hall
on 12th May, 2003

Present:-

Margaret Ball	Area Assembly Support Officer, RMBC
Councillor Georgina Boyes	Ward No. 21 (Thurcroft and Whiston)
John Clephan	Integrated Development Plan Manager
Dave Cooper	Network Manager, Streetpride, RMBC
Adrian Garner	Maltby Resident
Susan Green	Democratic Services Officer, RMBC
Don Hingley	Thurcroft Resident
Martin Hughes	Area Officer, RMBC
Councillor Geb Nightingale	Ward No. 21 (Thurcroft and Whiston)
Tom Knight	Streetpride Manager, RMBC
Ted Palmer	Thurcroft Forum
Councillor Ron Pearson	Ward No. 21 (Thurcroft and Whiston)
Chris Purvis	Greystones Action Group
Councillor Glyn Robinson	Ward No. 14 (Maltby) – IN THE CHAIR
Sam Rowley	Area Co-ordinator, Rother Valley East
Councillor Amy Rushforth	Ward No. 14 (Maltby)
Connie Shepherd	Thurcroft Resident
Ray Sholl	Thurcroft Resident
Chris Sissons	Community Planning Officer, RMBC
Don Straw	Whiston Parish Council
Steve Wibberley	Area Manager, Rother Valley (Streetpride) RMBC

146. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Andy Wright, Russell Howes, George Bates, Councillor Jo Burton, George Skinner and David Morton.

147. PRESENTATION – ROTHERHAM STREETPRIDE

Dave Cooper, Streetpride Network Manager, RMBC attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the launch of the above initiative, the mission of which was to work with the community to maintain and improve the street scene to a standard which will promote civic pride and community responsibility.

The initiative, which cut across other Programme Areas, would bring together all services that contribute to the upkeep and maintenance of the built environment.

One of the main components of Streetpride is to devolve budgets to Area Assemblies, in addition to the Hotspot money, to be discussed in more detail later in the presentation.

The presentation outlined the following aspects to deliver the mission:-

- Vision
 - * first impressions count
 - * branding issues (uniform/vehicle livery change)
 - * Ambassadors for Rotherham
 - * eyes and ears – to report any Streetpride issues
 - * one stop “golden number”
 - * crime and disorder – (information to cctv office and carried through to South Yorkshire Police)

- Functions
 - * Street Cleansing Refuse Collection
 - * Highway Maintenance Litter Picking
 - * Grounds Maintenance Graffiti Removal
 - * Street Lighting Design & Construction
 - * School Crossing Patrols
 - * Neighbourhood & Environmental Wardens

(For example, street lighting out, potholes in carriageway, overhanging vegetation, abandoned vehicles, burnt out cars)

All functions above are reached by telephoning the one stop golden number. Housing and Environmental Health Programme Area is a substantial player in Streetpride (Refuse collection and Wardens) but Economic Development Services is the major player. EDS has therefore restructured around Streetpride initiative.

- Organisational Structure in EDS
2 Guiding Principles:-
 - * Remove Client/Contractor Split
 - * Introduce community involvement and area based working

- Community Delivery Unit
Management Structure
 - * Area Managers and Area Co-ordinators

- Devolved Budgets
 - * Rother Valley East – Area Budget of £22,430 + £5,000 Hotspot Money – Total of £27,430 (calculation based on population and length of highway). Opportunity for Area Assemblies to be given choice of how to spend the budget and they are required to produce a spending plan. It was suggested focus groups decide on that and ultimately the Area Assembly Chairman will authorise by 31st August, 2003.

- Indicative “shopping list” provided to help produce spending plan

- Sample Performance Targets
Performance targets have been developed to show response times for commonly requested services (time to repair a reported street light out, time to remove a burnt out car, time to remove racist or offensive graffiti).
Service statements will also be developed indicating what you can expect (for example, how frequently the grass is cut and how often the streets are swept and then indicating how Streetpride are performing on the services).
- Next Steps
 - * Soft launch – 2nd April, 2003
 - * Area Assembly Visits – April/May 2003
 - * BPR – now until September, 2003
 - * Official Launch – September/October, 2003
 Media/Publicity
Banners on arterial routes
Rotherham Connect

At the end of the presentation, the following questions were raised:-

- * Councillor Pearson referred to street lights and asked how the delay in lights coming on was handled, with particular reference to Yorkshire Electricity?
- RMBC was aware that the current Contracts with YE allow up to 15 days to rectify a problem. The Councils across South Yorkshire were striving for Yorkshire Electricity and suppliers to respond very quickly. RMBC would be striving to improve their in-house response to reported faults over the next two years by introducing more frequent evening scouting of street lights. RMBC saw this as being very important.
- * Was there an e mail address for Streetpride?
- Yes. Further information on the services to be provided would be placed on the Council's web site – www.rotherham.gov.uk. Problems could already be reported via the web site – for example, potholes.
- * In the case of old street lighting (orange) in the Greystones Estate, Whiston which gave very little light, was it possible to have them upgraded?
- Officers present agreed to take further details after the meeting and to investigate the matter. However, the work across the Borough was subject to prioritisation.
- * Councillor Pearson referred to a system used in Sheffield whereby the main streets were patrolled. For example, drunkards were moved away from the main areas which he felt was a good idea.

- It was believed this initiative did not cover many Departments and only focussed on individual service areas. RMBC's was quite a wide-ranging service. Environmental Wardens would deal with litter tipping and dog fouling, particularly in town centre, but there was no service specifically dealing with drunkards.

* How would the Environmental Wardens fit into the Streetpride initiative because they were contracted to areas.

- Regarding fly-tipping, as reports are received Streetpride would work with Environmental Wardens on whether they could glean evidence to use in proceedings against people if it was illegal. Similarly regarding hotspot litter areas where particular work had recently been carried out targetting areas around schools. Certainly litter was seen as a major problem and, similarly, effort had been concentrated in Clifton Park on the problem of dog fouling.

* Did the £27,000 devolved budget incorporate the £5,000 hotspot money which was still external funding.

- Yes, it was a total sum.

* Did the hotspot element still have to be spent on environmentally sustainable projects?

- Not certain but it was believed it had to be spent on service delivery rather than sustainable projects. There was still a wide scope for using hotspot money which did not seem to be restricted. It was not envisaged to be a problem.

The meeting was informed that assistance would be given with the Assembly's Spending Plan.

The Chairman referred to the system of defining how to spend the money. He felt the best way was to contact active groups in all areas and invite a number of people to form Focus Groups for Maltby and Thurcroft/Whiston. The Funding Plan had to be signed off by each Area Assembly Chairman by July and implemented in September. A prioritised list would be drawn up with possible walkabout sessions. Officers from Streetpride would attend these groups in an advisory capacity. It was appreciated that the process was rushed this year but any projects or ideas not taken up could be considered in next year's budget. This would be co-ordinated by the Area Assembly Officers.

Resolved:- That the Officers from the Streetpride Section be thanked for their presentation.

148. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed:- That, with the exception of the following amendments, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14th April, 2003 be approved as a correct record.

- Page 10 – third paragraph – should read “had been able to **see** a copy of the Plan on CD-rom”
- Page 20 – Members Community Leadership Fund – should read “Councillor Robinson reported that Ward **14** Members (not Ward 21) etc.”

149. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Green Spaces Best Value Review/Greenspace Assessment

Martin Hughes read out a response from Richard Pett, Rights of Way Officer, Design and Engineering Service regarding a query raised at the previous meeting from a Whiston resident, about becoming involved in an Access Forum.

Richard Pett understood that the gentleman in question had not applied until a month or so after RMBC's deadline for applications had closed. The Forum is new and operated under fairly strict guidelines including formal interviews. Richard believed the gentleman's name was on file and would contact him when a vacancy occurs. As Rotherham was the first place in Yorkshire to organise a forum and operated under the guidelines (although Bradford and Kirklees were an experimental area) he felt it was inevitable to have a few teething problems. RMBC had promoted the work and had a formal job advert.

Andy Savage will contact the Whiston resident direct.

(b) Green Spaces Best Value Review/Greenspace Assessment

Regarding a question at the previous meeting from a Whiston resident about the date being altered for an open space event at Whiston Manorial Barn, Martin Hughes read out the response to an e mail sent to John Rotherham, Culture, Leisure and Lifelong Learning on the matter.

It seemed that the date published in the Events Leaflet was incorrect. The Service did publish a large number of fliers to provide information about the correction and someone had attended the venue on the advertised date to ensure that anyone arriving could be properly informed of the error (and of the revised arrangements). It seemed that, despite the best efforts of the Service, some people were disappointed. The address of the Whiston resident had been passed to the relevant officer.

(c) Recycling Facilities

(1) Martin Hughes read out a letter sent to community groups, enclosing a copy of a letter from RMBC, following an intention by RMBC to expand 'bring' recycling facilities throughout the borough, as

reported at the previous meeting, and a request at that meeting regarding what the pros and cons of looking after such a scheme would be.

The letter stated that there is an opportunity for local groups to look after these sites. In return the group will receive an amount of money for each tonne of material collected.

The letter pointed out that Dale Otter, Environmental Health Services has indicated that the advantages are:-

- an asset to the community
- a local facility for the benefit of residents
- environmental benefits
- money available for advertising
- group receives 'recycling credits' (money per tonne)
- site will be screened and signposted

Dale Otter felt there were no disadvantages, as managing the site would only entail ensuring the banks do not overflow or look untidy. If this does occur the group would need to contact the Waste Management Section of Rotherham MBC or the contractor.

Chris Sissons commented that he had sounded out groups on this matter some months ago. Three or four groups from Maltby and one from Whiston had expressed an interest. There had been no groups to liaise with in Thurcroft. Chris asked any interested groups in Thurcroft to contact him if any Association was willing to take on the scheme.

(2) Regarding a further query raised during the same discussion, regarding how well the bottle bank was used in Sitwell Car Park, Martin Hughes read out an e mail from Dale Otter which gave the following facts.

During 2002/03 20 tonnes of paper and 30 tonnes of glass had been collected at the site.

150. CORRESPONDENCE

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

(a) Letter from Greystones Action Group regarding a Community Chest grant of £150 which had been awarded to them.

This money had intended to be for a Christmas Disco for local children. Unfortunately this had been cancelled at the last minute due to a problem with the venue. It had then been intended to hold an Easter disco. This event had also not gone ahead due to lack of interest.

The letter requested that the grant be carried forward to an OAP sing-a-long evening planned for 17th July and apologised for any inconvenience this may have caused.

It was agreed:- That the Community Chest grant of £150 awarded to Greystones Action Group be used for the OAP sing-a-long evening, as reported.

(b) Letter from Jeana Hallas, Co-ordinator, Rotherham Social Enterprise Unit informing of her move to manage the new independent Rotherham Social Enterprise Unit. Jeana could be contacted on her temporary telephone number of ☎01709/830882 and was based at 17 Moorgate Street, Rotherham S60 2DA.

Jeana's unit welcomed self-referrals from prospective or current projects and offered advice, training, mentoring, grant or loan support in developing a sustainable Social Enterprise. They also received referrals from community members, local Area Partnerships, Rotherham Partnership, local Voluntary Organisations, Community Development Workers, Area Officers, Community Planning Officers, Councillors, any RMBC officer, Northern College, CEDR and any other point of referral.

The enterprise needs to be run by 3 or more community members, who form a company by guarantee, an IPS, or a co-operative. They need to employ local people, to deliver a community-beneficial service or product. The surplus must be re-invested in the enterprise or local community.

(c) Letter sent to key Organisations from Martin Hughes enclosing a copy of Rotherham's Community Strategy, full copies of which are available from Janet Wheatley (Tel: 373782) or Dawn Roberts (Tel: 822785).

The letter pointed out that, in future, the local community plans which groups may have been involved in, will feed into the Rotherham Community Strategy.

151. HANDOUTS

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

- Today's Agenda
- Area Assembly Team Report
- Rother Valley East Community Skips
- Future Agenda Items
- Area Assembly Newsletter
- Community Fund – cash for your community
- Tooled Up for Basic Skills

- Women in Front – Leadership Skills

152. THURCROFT LANDFILL LIAISON

Councillor Pearson reported that the last meeting of the above had been held on site on 7th May, 2003, followed by a tour of the site.

The road into the site was in very good condition and was kept clean due to a tyre washer on site.

The four cells that were being prepared had been looked at, the first of which would be ready for domestic waste in Spring of next year.

Complaints had been made of noise from a rock crusher. This was crushing rock to use as hardcore.

A cover was being made to deaden the noise but neither the crusher nor any of the plant had been running whilst on site due to a mechanical breakdown. Production of coal from the tip was up to expectations and it was all being burned in one particular power station.

The problem of coal lorries going through Thurcroft had been solved by the opening of the dual carriageway at Hellaby and a big notice had been erected which informed all lorry drivers to turn right when leaving the site.

Most of the burned out cars had been removed by scrap dealers due to the increase in the price of scrap.

The meeting had been informed by the environmental officer that the dust and noise levels were well within the limits imposed by the Planning Conditions.

The Waste Recycling representative stated that it is most likely that the firm would be subject to a takeover bid but this would have no effect on the operation on the tip.

Negotiations were still ongoing with the Parish Council for handing over the allotments on Steadfolds Lane as a community gain for the village, the delay having been caused by the amount of weed. Waste Recycling had stated that the problem would be dealt with in the near future.

The footpaths officer commented that consideration was being given to making New Orchard Lane beyond the Villas a bridal path. This would restrict vehicles going beyond the sub-station. He also said huge boulders have been placed along the perimeter footpaths in an effort to restrict the use of motor bikes on the site.

153. FEEDBACK FROM THURCROFT PARISH COUNCIL

Councillor Geb Nightingale reported on work undertaken by the Parish Council since the last meeting of the Assembly held in Thurcroft in February.

The allotments would now be signed over to Thurcroft Parish Council and a meeting has been arranged with the Solicitor.

The area of land was approximately 17½ acres but 3½ acres had Japanese Weed on and a Belgium Company was involved in an attempt to irradiate it. It had therefore been decided to leave approximately 3½ acres and take it over a period of 12 months to see if the treatment worked and then probably for the Parish Council to sign for that land.

Match-funding had now been obtained for an Outdoor Leisure Centre. This would consist of a basketball pitch and new children's play area.

Regarding Brookhouse Ponds, Thurcroft, drawings had been submitted to RMBC and Waste Recycling.

All three initiatives would be beneficial to the community.

154. INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN REPORT

John Clephan, Integrated Development Plan Manager, gave an update on the current situation of the following projects.

Environmental Improvement Project

An application for funding had been submitted in order to carry out environmental projects in the area. The work would be implemented by Groundwork's ILM which had recently been established in the area. A consultation event had been held on the recreation ground. The event had been well attended and people had been asked to come forward with projects which they felt the ILM team could do. There had been a huge response and the team were now in place. Until they are established and could draw up other projects, work consisted of quick and easy litter picks.

Sites and Premises Study

In line with the IDP, there was a need to develop certain sites for new business units and some Consultants have been looking at the vacant sites and premises in Maltby, Thurcroft and Hellaby.

There was currently a shortlist of four sites – three in Maltby (including the Edward Dunn site) and one in Thurcroft (depot on Arbour Drive). Further details would be reported at a future meeting.

There was still a chance to comment on those four sites and ask questions regarding the sort of development there will be. The next stage would look in more detail and possibly rule out some sites for various reasons. The study was presently incomplete.

Mineral Line Project

In the IDP there is a project to convert a disused mineral railway line into a cycle and footpath to Dinnington. An application form must be submitted and efforts were being made to seek some funding for the long term maintenance of the line so until this is done the project could not move forward.

A steering group meeting to discuss the project was to be held on the 27th May at 2.00 p.m. in the Miners Welfare in Thurcroft.

Support to New Businesses in the Area

Within the IDP, a Business Support Officer (Fiona Humpage) had been appointed. Fiona has been organising some awareness events for anyone who is thinking of starting their own business or newly formed business. These would be similar to a Business Fayre and several organisations had been invited to take the opportunity to speak to them for advice and assistance. Some of the organisations included local banks and Chamber of Commerce. Draft leaflets were available on request and the date for the Thurcroft event is 4th June in the Christian Fellowship Hall.

The meeting was asked to pass on this information to anyone interested in starting their own business.

Copies of the latest newsletter were also made available at the meeting.

Geb Nightingale referred to the depot on Arbour Drive and reported that the Parish Council was presently in negotiations with the Consultants to establish whether that could be handed over to Thurcroft Parish Council.

155. AREA ASSEMBLY TEAM REPORT

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

Community Planning - Thurcroft

Progress had been made since the previous meeting. Eight people had attended the first meeting of the Thurcroft Community Plan Steering Group on Thursday, 8th May, 2003. The group agreed a plan of action. This included development work with groups in Thurcroft,

Thurcroft Community Conference in the Autumn, leading to writing up of the plan.

The next meeting of the steering group is on Thursday, 5th June 2003 7.00 p.m. at the Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall. The Steering Group will be looking at how to work with existing groups and projects in Thurcroft and how to develop the existing plans and audits that have been written and impact on the village.

Further information would be given at the next meeting.

Chris would be available in Thurcroft to assist any group to develop their ideas in terms of planning, finances, funding and liaising with Agencies. Local residents were also invited to attend the Meeting in June and join in that process.

The Integrated Development Plan is paying for the whole of the Community Planning process. Lots of activities were going on in Thurcroft and it was a really good opportunity to make an exciting plan which did justice to the village.

Community Planning – Maltby

As stated in the previous minutes, having a Community Plan had helped Maltby raise money to purchase the old Methodist Church on Blyth Road which will be the headquarters for the Maltby Community Development Trust. The money had evolved through the regeneration budget and there is also more in the pipeline to develop the process. The Trust will be developing issues in the Community Plan and IDP and other ideas and will be working for the people of Maltby in the foreseeable future.

In terms of development, the Trust was moving the IDP on a step further and a team of consultants was managing locally. This was one of the most highly developed Trusts in the county and they had an excellent reputation.

It had now reached the position where there is an abundance of experience on the ground.

At the end of June work would proceed on the outline Business Plan which will enable the refurbishment of the building to take place. Throughout the Autumn further detail would be added to the Plan and developing the skills of the members of the Board.

This was seen as a major step forward for Maltby, added to an existing development.

Community Planning – Whiston

Work was progressing in Whiston. Their Plan was being written up. There would be lots to report later on this work.

Martin Hughes reported on the following aspects of work:-

Rother Valley East Area Plan

The final version of the Area Plan is now awaiting political approval 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.

Community Skips in Rother Valley East

The 30 skip days for the Area Assembly have been agreed (see meeting's handout pack). There was a potential problem with one of the locations in Maltby which is currently being clarified. There is an opportunity for Rother Valley East to access a segregated skip day. This would be a one off trial that would allow three skips (for green waste, scrap metal and residual material) to be in one location for a day. A member of the waste management unit will be present on this day to help supervise, alongside the community organisation that is allocated this facility. The location needs to measure 12m by 12m. It needs to be booked for the summer period but cannot be during the weekend.

The Chairman pointed out the commitment for organisations to be there for the day with a member of the Waste Management Unit. Also it had to be an appropriate site.

Chris Sissons suggested that a letter be sent to all existing groups who normally have skips, in addition to other relevant groups, asking if there is a suitable site and whether any group would be willing to participate. The responses could then be shortlisted and fed back to Waste Management.

Martin Hughes commented on an existing site at the Sitwell Arms site, Whiston, which already offered that facility.

Councillor Pearson reported that the green waste disposal system had worked very well on the Sitwell Arms site at the weekend.

Chris Purvis felt it highly unlikely a site would be big enough in Whiston. Otherwise, skips were doing very well at both Whiston sites.

Thurcroft Mineral Line and Fisheries Project

The next meeting to discuss the Mineral Line will take place on Tuesday, 27th May 2003, 2.00 p.m. at Thurcroft Miners Welfare.

Staff Update

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, together with other issues concerning the future of Area Assemblies.

In addition, Chris Sissons commented on ward boundary changes in June, 2004 and its impact on Area Assemblies, a factor which was also being borne in mind before appointing new staff within the Area Assembly team. Cost savings were also being considered.

Full details on the above issues was available in the meeting's handout pack.

156. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

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

- Local Transport Plan – Maltby
- Corporate Plan
- Annual Library Plan
- Crime on Public Transport
- Work with Adult Offenders
- Spoken History Project

It was agreed:- (1) That, in view of the next meeting being in Maltby, an update on the Local Transport Plan, and Annual Library Plan, be placed on the meeting's agenda.

(2) That any other relevant local issues be considered at the point of agenda planning.

157. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Monday, 9th June, 2003 at the Full Life Christian Centre, Thurcroft.