

**CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
FRIDAY, 16TH APRIL, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Robinson (in the Chair) and Councillor Ali.

Apologies for absence:- An apology was received from Councillor Sangster.

26. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Community Planning and Social Inclusion held on 19th March, 2004 be received.

27. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH MARCH, 2004

(a) Minute No. 21 – Voluntary Action Rotherham

The Social Inclusion Manager had met with the Chief Executive from Voluntary Action Rotherham and agreed the following:-

- To receive a copy of the business plan and priorities ready for submittance to the next meeting of the Cabinet Member.
- To provide the same level of financial contribution for the first six months of this financial year.

(b) Minute No. 22 – Social Inclusion Unit Restructuring

The Social Inclusion Manager confirmed that proposals for restructuring were to be presented next week by the Assistant Chief Executive and Executive Director of Housing and Environmental Services. A briefing session would then be arranged for the Cabinet Member and Advisers.

28. BUILDING CIVIL RENEWAL CONSULTATION PAPER

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Planning and Development Manager, which summarised the Government's Civic Renewal Consultation Paper, to inform Members of current Government thinking in terms of support for the community sector.

The Home Secretary considered civil renewal to be the centrepiece of the Government's reform agenda over the next few years. It was both about "redefining the relationship of the state to the people it served, locally and nationally, and about economic and social regeneration driven by popular engagement".

The Government set out three options to provide support, which were set

out in the report, but recognised that the best way forward may be in combining aspects of each.

The issue of sustainability needed to be addressed, particularly in view of the changes to the external funding environment and the nearing cessation of SRB and Objective One.

It was suggested that a further report on the outcome of the Government's consultation agenda be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member.

It was noted that a lot of work was already taking place here in Rotherham in line with the Government's agenda and this should be promoted and demonstrated regionally and nationally.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of the consultation paper be noted.

(2) That consideration be given to further reports, in due course, on the outcomes of the consultation and the wider issue of sustaining support for the community sector.

29. BENCHMARKING COMMUNITY PLANNING

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Planning and Development Manager, which informed Members of the work undertaken to ensure that benchmarks could be applied to community planning to measure progress year after year.

The report set out the steps taken to train staff on a multi-agency basis to implement the Active Partners Framework and evaluate community involvement in the process of community planning.

The key outcome of the Active Partners Framework was to provide a more practical experience of partnership working and develop an action plan which would help communities develop and involve partnerships in addressing and identifying needs in a strategic way.

Applying knowledge, skills and tools through training would form part of the next phase. A number of Area Assembly Officers and Community Planning Officers had already identified some opportunities to take this forward.

Attention was drawn to the appendix attached to the report submitted and the list of organisations that attended the Active Partners and Community Planning training during November, 2003 to March, 2004.

Members were informed that Rotherham was the first Local Authority in the region to work with Yorkshire Forward on the development of the training, which had previously only been applied within external funding

programmes.

Questions were raised about the community planning process within Area Assemblies and how this was drawn together and Members were informed that the whole process was co-ordinated and priorities agreed in consultation with the local communities.

Resolved:- That the contents of the report be noted.

30. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Consideration was given to the final report of the Best Value Review Support for the Democratic Process, which had been submitted for Members' attention.

The report outlined the scope and wide range of the review with particular focus on:-

- Community Leadership.
- Role of Members.
- Training and Development linked to the Role of Community Leaders.
- Functions and Support to the Democratic Process.
- Area Assemblies.

The recommendations and actions for improvement within the review report, specific to Area Assemblies and Community Planning, needed to be taken up as part of the revised structures in the future.

The implementation of the recommendations was important and should be built into the work programme for the new services split between the Executive Director of Housing and Environmental Services and Chief Executive's Office.

Members acknowledged and noted the changes facing Area Assemblies and the financial implications of the continuation of the Community Leadership Fund.

Redefinition of the role of Area Assemblies would commence in the next few weeks in preparation for the changes following the June election.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

(2) That the recommendations and actions for improvement should be closely monitored in order to act on proposals.

31. DEBT AWARENESS PROJECT

Janet Scott, Money Advice and Welfare Rights Manager, circulated a copy of the report and introduced Mike McAughtrie, Debt Awareness Project Officer who gave an outline of a press release from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which informed Members of the new Debt Awareness Campaign and what it was hoped would be achieved.

The campaign would aim to address the debt problems across the borough by promoting debt awareness and delivery debt/money advice training. The campaign would also focus on skills, knowledge and

understanding from the National Adult Financial Capability Framework and would use a number of financial education resources and self-help materials already available.

Following consultation with a range of community partners two target groups have been identified requiring debt advice as a priority, namely:-

- Teenage Parents in Herringthorpe.
- Year 6 Children in Maltby.

Liaison with the Magistrates' Court had also led to the setting up of a much needed weekly advice session in this location.

The Government was committed in its drive to cut the crippling personal, economic and social costs of debt and would work in partnership both with the financial services sector and with voluntary and community bodies to achieve a step change in the availability of free debt advice for those who needed it.

Members noted the problems with credit card debt, reconsolidation of loans, high interest rates and the consumer driven culture.

Members were informed that the majority of the funding for the project came from the Community Legal Service over a period of three years and the Council was providing partial match funding in management time. Yorkshire Water Trust Fund had also provided an additional sum for updating a leaflet for clients faced with housing repossession. Additional funding would also be sought throughout the life of the project.

Members noted that the information contained in the report would be shared with all Members borough wide and a further report was to be presented to Cabinet.

Attention was drawn to the report arising from the Scrutiny Review into debt recovery and the need to increase money management skills in order to implement breaking the cycle of debt into practice.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

32. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AGENDA

Consideration was given to a summary presented by the Social Inclusion Manager of the Best Value Review of Regeneration submitted for Members' information, which detailed a range of different activities in partnership across the Council to assist with the inspection by the Audit Commission. The summary clearly showed the depth and breadth of activities at a neighbourhood level which were contributing to the regeneration in Rotherham.

Whilst there was some confusion around the inspection carried out by the

Audit Commission, this summary highlighted at an early stage what planning and information sharing took place leading up to the Best Value Review.

Resolved:- That the report and its contents be noted.

33. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FUND - EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Consideration was given to a further updated report of the Members' Community Leadership Fund which was circulated at the meeting.

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Manager gave a brief summary as to the background of the Community Leadership Fund, spend available, the range of activities and spends endorsed by Members and types of beneficiaries. From the total only three Members had not spent any of their allocation.

Members had been notified of the deadline for applications and applications received up to three weeks after have still been processed.

Special arrangements were made for Ward 1 (Anston and Woodsetts), in agreement with the other Ward Members, following the death of Councillor Bennett for his allocations to be approved so as not to disadvantage the area.

From the £165,000 funding available £133,000 had been spent and plans were in hand to publish an analysis of the Community Leadership Fund in Rotherham Matters to highlight the diversity of projects supported.

Liaison was taking place with regard to getting the Community Leadership Fund audited, but this would have to fit in with the Audit Work Plan for the coming year and may take some time to implement.

From the 1st July, 2004 Members would be allocated a sum of £500 each and it had been proposed that allocations be dealt with by Area Assemblies. A further report on this issue would be submitted to Cabinet, Scrutiny and Area Assemblies for information.

Members acknowledged the hard and extensive work undertaken in the implementation of the Community Leadership Fund and in ensuring that all necessary supporting documentation was included.

Members were informed that there had been a few occasions where applications had taken longer to process due to missing information or lack of capacity within the applicant groups, but the process had been made easier following the change in the financial regulations.

Resolved:- (1) That the Voluntary Sector Liaison Manager be thanked for his report.

(2) That the contents of the report be noted.

(3) That a report on the proposals for the future development of the Community Leadership Fund be referred to Cabinet, Scrutiny and Area Assemblies.

(The Chairman authorised consideration of the following item in order to process the matters referred to.)

34. NAMES OF FUTURE AREA ASSEMBLIES

The Chairman advised those present that names of the seven Area Assemblies had now been agreed following consultation with Area Assemblies, Members and Officers.

The names were now, therefore:-

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|----|---|------------------|
| 1. | Hoover, Wath and Swinton | Wentworth North |
| 2. | Keppel, Wingfield and Rotherham West | Rotherham North |
| 3. | Rawmarsh, Valley and Silverwood | Wentworth South |
| 4. | Rotherham East, Boston Castle and Sitwell | Rotherham South |
| 5. | Maltby, Hellaby and Wickersley | Wentworth Valley |
| 6. | Brinsworth, Catcliffe, Rother Vale and Holderness | |
| | Rother Valley West | |
| 7. | Dinnington, Anston, Woodsetts and Wales | Rother Valley |
| | South | |

This information would also be shared at the next meeting of the Area Assembly Chairs scheduled to take place on Thursday, 22nd April, 2004 at 2.00 p.m.

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

35. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Resolved:- That consideration be given to the Social Inclusion Unit Restructuring and Voluntary Action Rotherham as agenda items for the next meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers.

36. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting be held on Friday, 14th May, 2004, commencing at 10.00 a.m.