

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.**

Date: Friday, 19 November 2004

Time: 10.00 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October, 2004 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 2)
4. Community Development Strategy and Action Plan (report herewith) (Pages 3 - 35)
5. Rotherham Council Social Inclusion Position Statement (report herewith) (Pages 36 - 48)
6. Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum (report herewith) (Pages 49 - 52)
7. Date of Next Meeting - Friday, 3rd December, 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
22nd October, 2004

Present:- Councillor Robinson (in the Chair); Councillors Darby and Hussain.

Apologies were received from Councillors Ali, Sangster and Whelbourn.

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2004

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Community Planning and Social Inclusion, held on Friday, 17th September, 2004, be approved as a correct record.

14. VOLUNTARY ACTION ROTHERHAM (VAR) - PRESENTATION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF VAR

Further to Minute No. 5(c) of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Community Planning and Social Inclusion held on 9th July, 2004, Members welcomed to the meeting three representatives of Voluntary Action Rotherham: Janet Wheatley (Chief Executive), Margaret Oldfield (Vice-Chair) and Julie Robinson (Finance Manager). A further representative, the Chair Peter Broxholme, had been unable to attend because of illness.

Janet Wheatley gave a presentation to the meeting about the aims and objectives of Voluntary Action Rotherham and the wider role of the community and voluntary sector. The presentation and subsequent discussion included the following issues:-

(i) the Government's Change Up initiative and the possible role of community and voluntary sector organisations as service providers;

(ii) summary details of the community and voluntary sector in the Rotherham Borough area;

(iii) the current and future funding of Voluntary Action Rotherham;

(iv) the current and future funding of Community Development Workers, employed by Voluntary Action Rotherham; Members noted the likelihood of there being fewer Community Development Workers in the future; such Workers would be concentrated in areas receiving grant money from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund or from the European Objective 1, Priority 4; other Workers might be employed directly by Community Partnerships;

(v) the difficulties which Voluntary Action Rotherham was likely to experience in managing the reduction in the workforce of Community Development Workers;

(vi) the overall relationship between the Borough Council and Voluntary

Action Rotherham and the role of the Liaison Group;

(vii) the difficulties experienced by many community and voluntary sector organisations in having to rely upon grant funding for a single year only, instead of having the relative security of approved funding for several consecutive years.

The representatives of Voluntary Action Rotherham were thanked for attending this meeting.

Resolved:- (1) That the continuing importance of a close working relationship between the Borough Council and Voluntary Action Rotherham be acknowledged.

(2) That the appropriate officers report further on the membership, role and terms of reference of the Borough Council – Voluntary Action Rotherham Liaison Group.

(3) That the appropriate officers report further on ways in which the Borough Council might continue to support the role and work of Voluntary Action Rotherham, including:-

(a) ways of minimising the disruption likely to be caused to communities by the reduced availability of Community Development Workers; and

(b) the future use of the budget allocation of the community element of the CERB Fund.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting be held on Friday, 19th November, 2004, commencing at 10.00 a.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member and Advisors meeting
2.	Date:	19th November 2004
3.	Title:	Community Development Strategy and Action Plan
4.	Programme Area:	Chief Executives Department

5. Summary

This report has been prepared to inform the Cabinet Member for Community Planning and Social Inclusion, and his Advisors, of the progress of the Community Development Strategy review.

The attached draft Community Development Strategy has been prepared on behalf of the Rotherham Partnership, following a review process involving Council staff and partner agencies. A position statement was presented to the Corporate Management Team on 4th October 2004, which led to further amendments and subsequent work to prepare a list of possible action points to implement the strategy. The action points are intended to provide a focus for further partnership working which will specify the respective contributions of RMBC Programme Areas and the partner agencies, and result in a smart Action Plan to deliver the strategy. The Community Development Strategy and Action Plan, once completed, will be forwarded to Cabinet for approval prior to its presentation to the Rotherham Partnership Board in January 2005.

6. Recommendations

The Cabinet Member and Advisors are asked to note the progress of the Community Development Strategy.

7. Proposals and Details

'Vibrant Communities – Vital to Rotherham' is the revised Community Development Strategy, produced by the Community Development and Involvement Partnership (C.D.I.P.) on behalf of the Rotherham Partnership. The strategy and a list of proposed action points appear as Appendix A to this report.

The strategy takes stock of progress since June 2001, in particular the development of local community partnerships and the Community Empowerment Network, and the growing commitment of all partners to community engagement and civil renewal. The strategy proposes a new focus on the Neighbourhood Renewal areas and support for communities of interest.

8. Finance

The delivery of community development will have resource implications for the lead partners. This will include continuing to maximise access to external funding to support community development activities (particularly in the case of Voluntary Action Rotherham). It also requires the Council to consider how community development can increasingly be integrated into service delivery and to what extent discrete projects around community development are required.

RMBC currently funds community development staff in VAR to the tune of £73,253, which requires consideration for 2005/06.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Funding to support community development workers (employed by Voluntary Action Rotherham) is due to end in March 2005 and support for renewed funding at existing levels is unlikely to be obtained. Neighbourhood Renewal funding of £275000 has been agreed by the Rotherham Partnership for one year, to modernise the community development function at VAR. This will fund six staff and a team leader post. VAR is also bidding for funding from other sources. It is very likely, however, that the community development infrastructure will reduce and change to the detriment of the work outlined in the strategy.

Community Planning Officers have recently moved into the Neighbourhoods Programme Area. It is timely, therefore, to consider the future roles of these and other staff with a responsibility for engaging and supporting the communities. Indeed, a resource mapping exercise needs to take place across the Programme Areas to clarify the contribution the Council can make to the Strategy and Action Plan.

Whilst there is some new Government funding available in the near future which is designed to strengthen the voluntary and community sector infrastructure, it is not designed to directly fund community development work.

The Community and Economic Regeneration Budget (Communities) is currently being reviewed, and may offer some opportunities to develop new, more sustainable ways of enabling community development activity.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Corporate and LSP priorities

The Community Development Strategy underpins the delivery of the Community Strategy, Corporate Plan and the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. By encouraging community activity at different levels, it helps us meet the requirement to fully engage with Rotherham's communities. In the new vision for the Borough, under the heading, **Rotherham Involved**, we assert that,

“Rotherham will be made up of strong, sustainable communities, both of place and interest, and there will be many opportunities to be involved in civic life and local decision making”.

A clear Community Development Strategy will help to improve community engagement in a wide range of issues, and can potentially play a supporting role in all Council political priorities, and in furthering the Council's community leadership role. It is most obviously a key tool, however, for achieving the vision statement above.

Community development also has an underpinning role in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, by supporting people and developing skills to enable local people to engage fully in the improvement of their own neighbourhoods. As referred to in the equalities section below, the strategy has identified a clear focus on supporting deprived communities in the first instance in order to promote their engagement in the process of renewal. The NRS stresses the importance of "Prioritising the active involvement of communities – both geographical and communities of interest – and placing community needs and aspirations at the heart of neighbourhood renewal." The strategy directly responds to the need to achieve this aim.

Cross Cutting Issues

Sustainable development

It is recognised that encouraging local people to become engaged and involved in the regeneration of their own neighbourhoods increases the chances of sustainable development in those communities. This is a key message from the Policy Action Team reports, which fed into the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.

The effective engagement of local people, and good quality 'on the ground' consultation is also an essential requirement of large scale regeneration and planning programmes, for example, the Housing Pathfinder and the Local Development Framework process. Community development will also support people to engage in these processes.

Fairness

As the consultation paper on Building Civil Renewal acknowledges, "Community development is a value based activity". Specifically, community development work is based on the key values of:

- Social justice
- Participation
- Equality
- Learning
- Co-operation
- And environmental justice

With these values, community development is well placed to take forward the cross-cutting priority of "fairness" within the new vision for the borough. Specifically, community development is a key tool for involving hard to reach groups, and the focus of the new strategy prioritises help for "the most deprived and vulnerable communities of place and interest, where lack of community involvement and capacity impedes sustainable regeneration". The Community Cohesion agenda also requires skilled community development to provide help and guidance to local communities as well as facilitating positive relationships with partner organisations.

Sustainability

The position paper has undergone a sustainability appraisal, scoring very positive impact ratings under the following headings:

- Education and training to build skills and capacity
- Vibrant communities which participate in decision making
- Local needs met locally
- Social inclusion and equality across all sectors, and
- Partnership and a participative approach.

There is clearly a question mark over the sustainability of community development support in the borough. At the same time, however, if support is not provided it is unlikely that our efforts to engage communities in regeneration and renewal activities will produce sustainable results.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The Draft Community Development Strategy, 2004 to 2007

'Building Civil Renewal' [Civil Renewal Unit of the Home Office, January 2004].

'The Role of the voluntary And Community Sector in Service Delivery' [The Treasury, September 2002]

'Change-Up' [Home Office, 2004]

The strategy is the product of partnership working and involvement opportunities organised through the Community Development and Involvement Partnership Spoke (C.D.I.P.).

The paper has been discussed by:

Lee Adams, RMBC Assistant Chief Executive;

Alison Penn, External and Regional Affairs Manager;

Tom Cray, Executive Director, Housing and Environmental Services;

Andrew Balchin, Head of Neighbourhood Development Services;

Dave Roddis, Acting Performance and Development Manager H. & E.S.

and Michael Walker, Performance and Quality Manager.

Contact Name : Phil Rees, Partnerships Officer (Community and Voluntary Sector),
External Affairs Unit x 2738, phil.rees@rotherham.gov.uk

Appendix A.

Core features of the position paper

‘Vibrant Communities – Vital to Rotherham’

A strategy for engaging communities in civil renewal.

The core features of the paper are as follows:

Mission - Building strong communities to build a better future.

Vision - The Rotherham Partnership aims to make Rotherham a place where communities have a leading role in their own development, in partnership working, and the future of Rotherham.

Definition - “Community Development is about the active involvement of people in the issues which affect their lives. It is a process based on the development of an open and equal partnership between all those involved, to enable sharing of skills, knowledge and experience. It is initially concerned to address issues of powerlessness and disadvantage at local level”.

Levels of operation and context - The revised strategy refers to the need for community development support at four different levels: -

- with individuals and groups;
- with partnerships;
- with networks;
- and with agencies.

It places this work in the context of the Government’s drive for civil renewal.

Focus – “To ensure that community development resources are prioritised to build civil renewal in the most deprived and vulnerable communities of place and interest, where the lack of community involvement and capacity impedes sustainable regeneration”.

Appendix B

Vibrant Communities – Vital to Rotherham

A strategy to engage communities in civil renewal, 2004 - 2007.

Mission

Building strong communities to build a better future.

Vision

The Rotherham Partnership will make Rotherham a place where communities have a leading role in their own development, in partnership working, and the future of Rotherham.

October 2004

Vibrant Communities – Vital to Rotherham

1. Introduction

In June 2001 the Rotherham Partnership adopted a Community Development Strategy. Since that time there has been considerable progress, both locally and nationally, in policy developments that recognise the importance of engaging fully with local communities at all levels, and supporting local people to become more involved in their own communities.

‘Vibrant Communities – Vital to Rotherham’ is the product of a review of that 2001 strategy. It focuses on the role of communities in contributing to the successful delivery of the Rotherham Community Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, and the improvement of local public services through community involvement and independent action.

At a national level, the Government has recognised the importance of active citizenship. In its paper on ‘Building Civil Renewal’, it identifies that;

“Civil renewal depends on people having the skills, confidence and opportunities to contribute actively in their communities, to engage with civic institutions and democratic processes, to be able to influence the policies and services that effect their lives, and to make the most of their communities’ human, financial and physical assets.”

Locally, we are moving towards ‘Community Planning’ being a formal part of the main agencies’ planning processes – developing mechanisms to enable local people to contribute their views, influence the services they receive and deliver improvements through their own initiatives. The main delivery partners have already started to implement services that are more responsive to neighbourhood and individual requirements through improved consultation and more effective ways of working. The Council, for example, is setting up a new Neighbourhoods Programme Area that focuses on co-ordinated service delivery and enables residents to influence and play a role in their own neighbourhoods. This builds on experience gained through area based initiatives and Rotherham’s piloting of Neighbourhood Management.

Supported by recent Government policy, the voluntary and community sectors are also beginning to strengthen their role in Rotherham. Bodies such as Voluntary Action Rotherham are reviewing and developing their services, as well as supporting a new, but growing Community Empowerment Network that feeds into the Local Strategic Partnership.

This document identifies how community development can play a role in ensuring that *all* people can contribute to the quality of life in their own communities through these new and developing structures and mechanisms, and through their own actions – ensuring that we build equality of opportunity in from the beginning.

'Vibrant Communities – Vital to Rotherham' begins by setting out the Rotherham Partnerships' Vision, Aims and Objectives for community development in the Borough, as well as the outcomes we would like to achieve. This is then set into a national and local context, exploring the contribution that community development work will make in achieving the broader aims of civil and neighbourhood renewal, and improved and more responsive service delivery.

It is important that there is a common understanding of the term *community development*, and the strategy provides a definition. It also recognises that community development must work at a number of different levels – from grass roots work with organisations and individuals, through to helping partner agencies remove barriers to participation, enabling communities to have a greater influence over their own lives.

In approving the review of the original strategy of June 2001, the LSP Board requested:

“a set of specific and realisable aims and objectives that encompass what we want from developed communities; how we provide for the differing needs and aspirations; and a clear direction for the work which all partners can support and take forward”.

The review of the original strategy and analysis of the current situation, gaps and issues to address, has met these requirements, and produced an implementation Action Plan. When the review was launched at a conference event in November 2003 – attended by 130 representatives of communities and agencies across the borough - one of the main conclusions was the need for all partners to implement the strategy once it has been approved by the Rotherham Partnership.

All Rotherham partners have contributed their own perspective to this document through the review process. There is a common understanding, however, that communities have a vital role in helping to deliver an improved quality of life in Rotherham, in partnership with agencies and organisations – and we need to develop mechanisms to enable them to do so.

2. The Mission, Vision, and Focus

The following Mission and Vision statements were distilled from the review process:

Mission

Building strong communities to build a better future.

Vision

The Rotherham Partnership will make Rotherham a place where communities have a leading role in their own development, in partnership working, and the future of Rotherham.

Focus

The review process also concluded that the focus of the revised strategy should be:

To ensure that community development resources are prioritised to build civil renewal in the most deprived and vulnerable communities of place and interest, where the lack of community involvement and capacity impedes sustainable regeneration.

3. Aims, Strategic Objectives and strategic indicators

From the consultation process, the detailed review of the June 2001 strategic objectives, and the analysis of 'where we are now', the following **aims** have been identified:

- 3.1 To create community organisations which are diverse and inclusive, vibrant and independent, creative and influential, well-governed and sustainable.**
- 3.2 To achieve effective engagement between agencies and communities**
- 3.3 To provide quality support for communities and partners at all levels of operation**

To achieve these aims and reflect the new focus on neighbourhood renewal areas and communities of interest, the following strategic objectives have been identified for the period 2004 - 2007.

To create community organisations which are diverse and inclusive, vibrant and independent, creative and influential, well-governed and sustainable we will:

- 3.1.a To increase by 10% per year the number of community organisations in the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas**
- 3.1.b To ensure that each of the 8 communities of interest identified in the NRS has a network to articulate the interests of those communities by 2007**
- 3.1.c To ensure that each community partnership in the NR areas has the long-term capacity to sustain the delivery of projects beneficial to the communities by 2006**
- 3.1.d Encourage each community partnership in the NR areas to attain at least level 3 on the Active Partners or Community Economic Development Frameworks by 2007**
- 3.1.e To increase by 20% the number of people who participate in local voluntary and community sector organisations by 2007**

To achieve effective engagement between agencies and communities we will:

- 3.2.a Create opportunities and structures for community involvement and participation in Neighbourhood Renewal and Management, which increase the influence of communities in the renewal process.
- 3.2.b To strengthen the links between the local partnerships, the Community Empowerment Network and the Rotherham Partnership
- 3.2.c Establish clear Community Planning processes for communities of interest to facilitate effective engagement
- 3.2.d Increase by 20% by 2007 the number of people in neighbourhood renewal areas who feel that service providers / statutory agencies are good at involving the public in the decision making process
- 3.2.e Implement the Compact and Codes of Good Practice between service providers and the voluntary and community sector by June 2005

To provide quality support for communities and partners at all levels of operation we will

- 3.3.a Implement an appropriate performance management framework, to monitor and evaluate the delivery of community development outcomes
- 3.3.b Increase, year on year, the number of staff involved in community development with accredited skills / relevant qualifications
- 3.3.c Increase by 5% per year the level of satisfaction of local groups, partnerships, networks and agencies, with the community development support they receive.

4. What is community development?

The Community Development Strategy of June 2001 defined community development as being about,

“The active involvement of people in the issues which affect their lives. It is a process based on the development of an open and equal partnership between all those involved, to enable sharing of skills, knowledge and experience. It is initially concerned to address issues of powerlessness and disadvantage at local level”.

The review process found this definition to be essentially correct - the only weak point being its failure to specify "all those involved" in the community development process. This revised strategy is clear in recognising that communities, statutory and voluntary sector organisations, can all play a part - building strong communities to build a better future - by working in a community development way. Essentially, this will involve working to empower communities, and build their capacity to bring about quality of life improvements through their own activities and in partnership with service providers.

5. What are the outcomes of community development work?

Community development work has a number of outcomes advantageous to our communities, the Rotherham Partnership and the partners within it. The following table lists five outcomes identified by the Community Development Foundation and illustrates them with examples:

Outcomes of community development	Examples of what community development can do
The personal growth and learning, and often increased employability, of the individuals who become active in community groups	It builds self esteem and raises aspiration; Provides first-step, accessible training - easing re-entry to life-long learning; Develops skills to meet personal and community objectives;
The greater interaction of people, the enhancement of their sense of community and their greater interest in local affairs	It combats isolation and exclusion – with benefits to health; Reduces fear of crime; Increases support mechanisms – crèches, playgroups etc. - contributing to improved employment opportunities;
Achievements by the community groups in which people have invested their activity - most of which spontaneously contributes to or complements one or more public service areas	It achieves tangible quality of life improvements - using organisational skills and knowledge to support communities to access and generate funds, deliver, negotiate and safeguard local improvements e.g. new / restored community assets; leisure facilities; environmental improvements etc.
The authorities' or partnerships' increased understanding of the local community, and the improvement in service delivery which this leads to	It helps to identify needs e.g. using Planning for Real [®] / Community Planning skills etc.; It brings service providers together and increases direct partner involvement with organised communities – to contribute to problem-solving; It facilitates involvement contributing to the attainment of Neighbourhood Renewal floor targets
The economic value of community and voluntary activity, explicit in social economy organisations and employment initiatives but also inherent 'in kind' in most of the aspects listed above.	It contributes to an enterprise culture; stimulates and supports the growth of community / social enterprises; Sign-posts people with ideas to appropriate channels of support; And encourages volunteering.

All of these outcomes, in turn, contribute to the goal of sustainable regeneration.

This strategy will have a wide impact on communities and on the achievements of public sector organisations in Rotherham. These **outcomes** can be summarised as follows:

Greater prosperity

Community and voluntary organisations can act as a platform for community enterprise. Regeneration programmes are strengthened and more lasting in impact when communities have a key role in management and leadership

Increased participation in learning

The strategy will actively support increased access to learning and training. Involvement in community activity is a major source of new transferable skills for people who may not access learning in other ways.

Safer communities

Well organized communities are better placed to contribute to developing local solutions and shape community safety initiatives. They can promote a sense of identity and belonging, which reduces fear of crime.

Improved health and social care

Services will benefit from the increased capacity of communities to be partners in planning services and by increased use of services by marginalized and isolated groups.

Vibrant cultural life

Communities will be better organised and connected with each other, providing a firmer basis for cultural and artistic activities

Cohesive communities

The Strategy aims to strengthen the organisation of excluded groups, which will help to involve representatives in formal decision making bodies, such as school governors and Primary Care Trusts. In turn this will contribute to greater equality of access to services and resources.

6. Why is it important?

The national policy 'drivers'

Community development is important to the Government, in particular, because it:

- underpins the Government's agenda of Civil Renewal
- and supports the development of capacity within the voluntary and community sector to take on a more active role in the delivery of public services

In the foreword to the consultation paper, Building Civil Renewal [December 2003] the Home Secretary, David Blunkett MP stated, that,

“Civil renewal must play a central role in the Government’s reform agenda in the coming years. Our vision is of a society in which citizens are inspired to make a positive difference to their communities, and are able to influence the policies and services that affect their lives.

Building the capacity of both individuals and groups within communities is central to the process of civil renewal, enabling local people to develop their own solutions to the issues which most affect them”.

The main text of the consultation paper also states that,

“Civil Renewal depends on people having the skills, confidence and opportunities to contribute actively in their communities, to engage with civic institutions and democratic processes, to be able to influence the policies and services that affect their lives, and to make the most of their communities’ human, financial and physical assets.”

Community development tackles precisely these issues.

Since 2002 the Government has been reviewing the role, remit and financial needs of the voluntary and community sector, culminating in a number of key policy documents and initiatives. These include; -

- the Treasury paper, The Role of the Voluntary & Community Sector in Service Delivery 2002 – A Cross-Cutting Review
- ‘Change Up’ - Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector (Home Office Active Partners Unit, June 2004).
- Futurebuilders¹
- And a Home Office review of Community Capacity Building is due for publication later this year.

Essentially, these papers and initiatives seek to develop the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to play a greater role in service delivery. In her Ministerial Foreword to the ‘Change Up’ paper, Fiona Mactaggart, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Race Equality, Community Policy and Civil Renewal, states,

“Enabling people to become active in their communities and supporting frontline organisations is at the heart of the Government’s commitment to renewing civil society and involving voluntary and community sector organisations in service delivery, especially in meeting the needs of those who are socially excluded”.

Once again, effective community development work is important to this agenda. It can help create community projects and enterprises to deliver and enhance local services, using local knowledge to address issues of exclusion, and it can help existing community partnerships consider such options as part of forward planning for sustainability.

¹ The ‘futurebuilders’ initiative is a £125 million fund to assist exemplary frontline organisations and social enterprises delivering frontline services to increase the scale and scope of their service delivery.

The local 'drivers' underlining the importance of community development

Locally too, effective community development work underpins the objectives of the Rotherham Partnership and partner agencies. It contributes to:

- the Community Strategy for Rotherham and the Rotherham Partnership's commitment to "ensuring that the Vision and Strategy are increasingly shaped by the needs and priorities of local communities".²
- the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) proposal to "focus more on service delivery and the experience of service users", in supporting service users and communities to comment and make active contributions to the improvement process.
- the commitment in the new vision for Rotherham, under the heading "Rotherham Involved", that "Rotherham will be made up of strong, sustainable communities, both of place and interest, and there will be many opportunities to be involved in civic life and local decision making".
- the National Policing Plan and the Home Secretary's underpinning theme of "community engagement and civil renewal" in which the Government expects all forces to engage as part of the national endeavour, and
- the Primary Care Trust's commitment to patient and public involvement, enabling "the people of Rotherham to voice their opinions and be involved in service development", enabling "the voices of excluded and vulnerable people to be heard and to facilitate the involvement of people who are not part of the traditional groups".

By encouraging active citizenship and organising community groups, partnerships and networks, community development also supports increased community involvement in:

- Local democracy
- Community Planning
- Neighbourhood renewal
- Consultations with partner agencies
- and problem-solving initiatives.

As the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders have shown, increased levels of community involvement can lead to:

- a greater understanding and take-up of existing services
- greater understanding and satisfaction with decision-making processes and service delivery
- more effective and inclusive channels of communication
- and a positive influence on service improvement, contributing to the attainment of floor targets

It is important to recognise, however, that community development is not just about the agendas of partner agencies. It is about helping both communities

² Rotherham's Community Strategy 2002 – 2007 page 7.

of place and communities of interest to identify and organise around their own issues and priorities, which sometimes may be at odds with those of partner agencies.

It is also about realising and encouraging the creative potential of communities to improve their own quality of life. Organised communities - groups and partnerships, active citizens and voluntary projects – already make a huge contribution to the well-being of the borough, by organising activities, providing accessible services, and helping to tackle social exclusion.

The following local examples illustrate what can be achieved through a community development approach.

Outcome example A: Personal growth and learning, and often increased employability, of the individuals who become active in community groups:

Community development work at a local level can contribute to social inclusion, by linking people to volunteering and learning opportunities. For example, a Community Development Worker in Dinnington enabled a local person with mental health issues to assist a local group by typing up minutes and making posters, at the same time gaining experience and receiving one-to-one informal training and confidence building from the worker.

Community Development Workers often arrange 'first step' accessible training to build the capacity of individuals and groups to move their projects forward. Examples of courses provided include ICT training, Health & Safety, Minute taking, Basic food hygiene etc. An outcome of this work is exemplified by a lady who took a basic Food Hygiene course, obtained a certificate and went on to gain employment in a Community Centre café.

Outcome example B: Achievements by the community groups in which people have invested their activity - new services, projects, campaigns - most of which spontaneously contributes to or complements one or more public service areas

Community development brings people together to achieve quality of life improvements. The Raw Energy project in Greasbrough, for example, involved the local community partnership working with local disaffected young people and a variety of agencies to develop a fishing pond. In doing so, the joint efforts of the young people, the community and their partners, brought together and supported by skilled community development work, produced a valued local amenity and tackled a difficult issue of youth nuisance in a constructive manner.

There are numerous examples of projects supported by community development, from breakfast and after school clubs - which compliment education, crime and health provision - to large regeneration projects led by local partnerships. Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership, for example, is leading the regeneration of Rosehill Park and the Park Hall, drawing down large sums of external funding.

7. Community development levels of operation

To be successful and supportive of the drive for civil renewal, Community development work is required at four different levels:

- Level One - with individuals and community groups
- Level Two - with Community Partnerships and communities of interest
- Level Three - with networks (e.g. the Network of Partnerships, and Voice – bringing together voluntary sector service providers and networks serving communities of interest, etc.)
- Level Four - with agencies and organisations – particularly those involved in the Rotherham Partnership.

At levels one, two and three community development work helps to develop the infrastructure of the community - the organisations and communication channels to help communities become influential partners and creative contributors to the well being of the borough.

Whilst it is important to recognise that this work requires specialists - skilled community development workers - it also needs a 'whole systems approach' from all partner agencies:

- the support of staff at strategic level, particularly on issues of sustainability
- the support of staff at area level – working in partnership and developing channels of communication, opportunities for community involvement etc.
- the support of front-line staff – for example:
 - Streetpride staff
 - Youth workers
 - The Library service
 - Social workers
 - Health visitors
 - Community constables
 - Neighbourhood wardensall of whom can help facilitate social inclusion, engaging with communities of interest - the people we often find hard to reach;
- And the support of Elected Members and other decision-makers – in fulfilling their community leadership role.

This collective approach is likely to involve all the above:

- encouraging volunteering and the formation of local organisations
- sign-posting and networking
- supporting with facilities and resources
- explaining the value and purpose of community involvement
- and of working in partnership.

Alongside this work, however, there is also a need for community development work at level four, facing partner agencies:

- to enable agencies to become more receptive and responsive to the needs, aspirations and priorities of the voluntary and community sector
- and to help agencies explain to communities the context and parameters of decision-making – the opportunities as well as the constraints of budgets, statutory responsibilities etc.

In this way, effective community development can “oil the wheels” of partnership working between communities and partner agencies.

8. Where we are now

The following analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (S.W.O.T.) provides a summary of the issues this strategy needs to address, and the subsequent text offers more detail:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><u>Level One – community groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A level of community activity in the borough above the national average; ▪ Over 15000 people involved in volunteering; ▪ Over 1,100 voluntary and community sector groups and organisations supporting regeneration, social inclusion projects, and service delivery. <p><u>Level Two – local partnerships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community partnerships in 22 separate communities; ▪ the majority having some form of Community Action Plan identifying local issues and actions that the community have agreed to address. <p><u>Level Three - networks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The development of the Community Empowerment Network - Network of Community Partnerships; and Voice – serving communities of interest / Voluntary sector service providers; <p><u>Level Four – partner agencies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voluntary and Community Sector reps. directly elected to the Rotherham Partnership Board and CDIP ▪ The Compact with the Vol/Com. Sector has been nationally recognised as an example of good practice ▪ Protocols governing the relationship between the Community Empowerment Network and the Rotherham Partnership completed ▪ Partner agencies have created a range of new opportunities for community involvement and participation –e.g. Area Assemblies; Community Planning; Improved standards of consultation; Patient and Public Involvement initiatives; and the Crime and Community Safety Partnership’s problem-solving task groups. 	<p><u>Level One – community groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 75% of voluntary and community sector groups are small and lack capacity to take on public service delivery; ▪ Small groups are often self-sustaining but lack access to specialist services – e.g. legal, financial, HR support. ▪ Concerns re. the quality of development support / lack of performance management <p><u>Level Two – local partnerships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The creation of local partnerships has been driven by external funding opportunities, with separate strategic outcomes, rather than by an overall community development strategy for the borough; ▪ Need for further development support / capacity building to enable spending / maximisation of available funding opportunities; ▪ A lack of organisational development for the 8 communities of interest identified in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. <p><u>Level Three - networks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Issues of accountability / channels of communication need to be addressed and developed to make community involvement in Rotherham Partnership Spokes and Networks more effective and democratic. This work requires resources. <p><u>Level Four – partner agencies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research findings suggest relationships / understanding of structures, respective roles and responsibilities need to be improved; ▪ The Compact needs to be operationalised and tested

Opportunities	Threats
<p><u>Levels One, Two and Three</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To reposition and co-ordinate available resources to deliver this strategy, in developing the RMBC Neighbourhoods Service and partnership working at area level; ▪ Government commitment to fund sub-regional infrastructure organisations, including specialist support through its 'Change Up' initiative; ▪ To utilise existing research into sustainability options³ to develop forward plans for the survival and / or rationalisation of community partnerships; ▪ Government policy, CPA requirements on local authorities and other public sector bodies to further develop community involvement <p><u>Level Four</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rotherham Partnership / partners are better placed to involve communities in the processes of neighbourhood renewal, wider Community Planning and the further development of the Community Strategy; ▪ To build consideration of Community Planning priorities into the Planning frameworks of partner agencies ▪ To contribute towards the sustainability of the sector through strategy development; procurement contracts; support for social enterprise development, and the release of community buildings for asset based regeneration; ▪ To apply frameworks e.g 'Active Partners' to measure and monitor the level of community involvement in regeneration / decision-making. ▪ To commit to the implementation of the Compact and Codes of Practice and embed them within the partner agencies. 	<p><u>Levels One, Two and Three</u></p> <p>Changing funding environment / reduction of grant funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Single Regeneration Budget is drawing to a close ▪ Objective 1 expenditure needs to be committed by December 2006 and spent by December 2008 ▪ There is uncertainty surrounding the future of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund ▪ The funding available via the Community Fund has reduced,⁴ ▪ The future of the VAR Community Development Workers team is uncertain, as most of the external funding ends on 31st March 2005,⁵ ▪ Competition for survival between infrastructure organisations could lead to confusion / tensions amongst local groups and partnerships; ▪ Sustainability issues for local partnerships - e.g. retention of staff and premises - post O1 / SRB. ▪ The loss of partnership staff / demise of local partnerships could undermine the process of civil renewal; <p><u>Level Four</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requirement to respond to national targets / directives can impact on agencies' priorities and ability to work at local / neighbourhood level e.g. the National Intelligence Model affecting the Police. ▪

³ 'South Yorkshire Coalfields Options for Sustainability Paper', produced on behalf of the South Yorkshire Coalfield Community Development Strategy Steering Group, 2004.

⁴ Due mainly to a reduction in Lottery ticket sales.

Community Development as a “way of working” began in Rotherham in the 1990’s with the appointment of Community Development Workers by Rotherham Borough Council and the creation of Rotherham Council for Voluntary Service (now VAR) posts in Canklow and East Herringthorpe. The primary focus of the work across the borough has been to stimulate local community activity and co-ordinate this growth in activity by forming partnerships at community level.

This work has contributed to:

- a level of community activity in the borough above the national average⁶
- the creation of over 2000 jobs in the voluntary and community sector⁷
- and a total annual income for the sector of approximately £32.4 million⁸, supporting regeneration, social inclusion projects, and service delivery - primarily in leisure and recreation, welfare / social care, and play / youth work.

Level One – community groups

At **level one** the borough now benefits from:

- over 1,100 voluntary and community sector groups and organisations whose services are accessed by residents 418,000 times per year
- over 15000 people involved in volunteering

It is important to recognise, however, that 75% of these groups and organisations rely solely on local volunteer effort and are mainly financially self-sustaining. Many survive on low levels of income generation, and 50% of these groups have a turn-over of less than £2500 per annum.

Level Two – community partnerships

Co-ordination at **level two** - community partnership and community of interest network formation - has largely been driven by the external funding streams, available to Rotherham that target neighbourhood level development work. Funding, primarily from SRB and European Objective One, has supported community development work and the development of geographic communities in our most deprived neighbourhoods across the borough via the formation of community partnerships and the development of community action plans.

⁵ Neighbourhood Renewal Funding has recently been approved for a new community development service in VAR, with six development workers and a team leader, for 12 months.

⁶ This is calculated by Government on the basis of the number of community groups per thousand population. In Rotherham we have 1130 groups divided by 251 and hence a percentage of 4.5%, with a 4% activity rate deemed to be healthy.

⁷ Source: ‘Valuing the Voluntary and Community Sector in Rotherham’ by VAR, 2003. “Based solely on the 438 responses to the survey, the sector in Rotherham employs 483 full-time and 586 part-time paid staff, who collectively work a total of 24,240 hours per week. Extrapolating from this, the sector employs at least 2,138 people”.

⁸ VAR’s research suggests this figure could be as high as £61 million per year.

As a consequence of a partnership approach to community development work at level two⁹, the borough now has:

- 40 self defined geographic communities
- community partnerships in 22 separate communities
- These partnerships are all at different stages but the majority now have some form of Community Action Plan identifying local issues and actions that the community have agreed to address in their neighbourhood
- And consequently, Rotherham Partnership agencies are better placed to involve communities in the processes of neighbourhood renewal, wider Community Planning and the further development of the Community Strategy.

With the focus of external funding being geographic, however, there has been little support at level two to develop organisations serving communities of interest across the borough.

A recent mapping exercise has shown that of the 8 priority communities of interest, identified in the Rotherham Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, only one community, the Minority Ethnic Community, has developed a fully independent network, supported by REMA. Three other networks (Asylum Seekers; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender [LGBT]; and young people) have a multi-agency membership. Rotherham's Older Peoples network is relatively small and is supported by both the PCT and RMBC to influence the Health & Social Care agenda. An inter-faith network is in the early stages of development and there are no networks currently in place for either women or people with disabilities, albeit in the case of disabled people there are numerous opportunities for effective engagement with statutory agencies.

Level Three - networks

In Rotherham, at **level three**, the voluntary and community sector is in the process of developing borough-wide networks that enable the sector to engage with, and influence the Rotherham Partnership. **The Community Empowerment Network, made up of Voice¹⁰ and the Network of Partnerships, already links into both the Community Development & Involvement Partnership Spoke and the LSP Board.**

Other networks are being established to mirror the themes of each Partnership spoke. The Thematic Networks developed so far include:

- the Community Safety Network with links to the Safer Rotherham Partnership Spoke
- the Health Network with links to the Health & Social Wellbeing Partnership Spoke

⁹ Support for the development of the Objective One Priority 4a Community Action Plans (CAPs), for example has involved joint work by VAR, RMBC, South Yorkshire Open Forum, Together for Regeneration, the WEA and Northern College.

¹⁰ Voice is a network serving voluntary sector service providers and communities of interest.

Thematic Networks still to be developed include:

- learning
- Social Enterprise
- and Housing.

The development of each of these networks is heavily dependent, however, on resources being made available to provide the necessary support.

Level Four – partner agencies

At **level four** - embedding a community development approach within the Rotherham Partnership agencies - the review process noted that significant progress has been made over recent years:

- Voluntary and Community Sector representatives have been directly elected onto the Partnership Board and the CDIP
- Work to develop a Compact with the Voluntary and Community Sectors has been nationally recognised as an example of good practice
- A set of protocols governing the relationship between the Community Empowerment Network (Network of Partnerships and Voice) and the Rotherham Partnership has been agreed
- and partner agencies have created a range of new opportunities for community involvement and participation.

More work can be done, however, to improve relationships between partner agencies and the voluntary and community sectors, and the Action Plan to deliver this strategy includes practical steps to achieve this goal. VAR's research highlighted the contribution the Voluntary and Community Sectors make to the borough underlined the need for improvement, noting:

- "It is more common for voluntary and community organisations to have working relationships with other organisations from within the sector than with external agencies"
- "There is a notion that many partnerships are characterised by a 'them' and 'us' relationship, and some members of the voluntary and community sector continue to feel that their participation is tokenistic".¹¹

Community development as a way of working needs to be developed at all levels, to achieve better service delivery for those communities in the borough that are most in need. The most effective interventions are often those where the community has been directly involved in the design and delivery of service improvements. Consequently, communities need to be developed and empowered to participate at all levels and the partners responsible for service delivery need to develop ways of working that enable communities to have real influence.

¹¹ Source: 'Valuing the Voluntary and Community Sector in Rotherham' by VAR, 2003.

9. Current issues

Although section 8 above, suggests community development in the borough is relatively healthy, there are a number of areas for concern:

- 9.1 The amount of external funding currently available to support neighbourhood level activity is reducing and not being replaced with similar funding streams¹². Specifically:
- The Single Regeneration Budget is drawing to a close
 - Objective 1 expenditure needs to be committed by December 2006 and spent by December 2008
 - The funding available via the Community Fund has reduced,¹³
 - It is likely that the community development service provided by VAR will reduce from March 2005 as most of the funding ends.
- Inevitably, the reduction / redirection of external funding will require partnership working to reposition available resources to deliver this strategy.

- 9.2 The lack of a clear focus and effective coordination of community development work

Agencies currently providing neighbourhood level support need to work together with the Voluntary and Community Sectors to focus resources and energy where growth is most needed and where the greatest impact can be made. The strategy review suggested this will involve a clearer focus on:

- Neighbourhood Renewal areas
- Development work with communities of interest
- Work to develop sustainable forward plans for community groups and partnerships

There are significant resources involved in front-line work with communities. The Action Plan to implement this strategy flags up the need to review and address the issue of co-ordinating and targeting this support.

- 9.3 The need to improve partnership working between the Voluntary and Community Sectors and partner agencies

A recent Community Development and Involvement Partnership survey noted that local Community Partnerships believed that through working collectively they could influence decisions within their neighbourhoods. However, when asked how they felt their views were listened to by the statutory agencies most replied either 'partially' or 'rarely'. Many

¹² See: The demise of SRB, VAR 2004

¹³ Due mainly to a reduction in Lottery ticket sales.

respondents stated that they would welcome the opportunity to work with agencies, but that there needed to be greater involvement and cooperation between them. The revised Community Development Strategy, therefore, argues that agencies need to develop better ways to both engage with communities and enable communities to have real influence.

9.4 The need to improve the quality of community development support

The review process recognised that a number of factors have impacted adversely on the quality of community development work since 2001:

- No shared understanding of community development or clear vision of community development outcomes amongst partners involved in the process
- A period of organisational change and uncertainty, related to the transfer of Community Development Workers from Rotherham MBC to VAR in April 2002
- A period of organisational change / lack of management capacity within VAR
- Significant changes / staff turnover / recruitment difficulties within the CDW team following the appointment of experienced CDW staff to the Council's new team of Community Planning Officers
- The lack of professional development work experience amongst new recruits
- The difficulty of recruiting and retaining experienced managers
- The lack of a performance management framework linked to the delivery of community development outcomes agreed by partners
- The constant pressure to secure external funding from a variety of sources to continue and develop the work diverts energy from attaining outcomes and
- Makes the delivery of a strategy more difficult, as there are a number of pipers "calling the tune"

It is essential, therefore, that this revised strategy addresses the issues of quality and performance management to ensure our communities receive the development support they require:

- to play a full role as partners in social and economic regeneration
- to deliver their own agendas for improvement and influence improved service delivery
- and continue to contribute to the well being of the borough.

A number of action points have been identified through the review process and flow from the strategic objectives in this paper. The attached Action Plan identifies actions to deliver the objectives and the three main aims of the strategy, and identifies responsibility and a time frame for implementation.

Appendix C. Community Development Strategy Action Plan.

Community Strategy Aims and Objectives	
Aim	
3.1	To create community organisations which are diverse and inclusive, vibrant and independent, creative and influential, well-governed and sustainable.
	Objective
3.1. a	To increase by 10% per year the number of community organisations in the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Locate CDWs in NR areas
2	Assess options available for future funding of CDWs in NR Areas
3	Produce forward plan
	Objective
3.1. b	To ensure that each of the 8 communities of interest identified in the NRS has a network to articulate the interests of those communities by 2007
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Identify gaps from existing assessments / mapping of communities of interest, and identify staffing needs
2	Determine resources required, develop funding options and identify forward plan

	Actions suggested by the review
3	Establish dedicated officers to address the needs identified above
	Objective
3.1. c	To ensure that each community partnership in the NR areas has the long-term capacity to sustain the delivery of projects beneficial to the communities by 2006
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Organise training for front-line staff working in NR communities on community enterprise development and procurement-contracting
2	Baseline the % of the procurement budgets of statutory agencies spent on purchasing services from the voluntary and community sector
3	Encourage the growth of procurement contracting with the voluntary and community sector by organising an annual procurement fair, or linking into the Footsie 100 Social Enterprise event.
4	Promote commissioning / procurement contracting opportunities within the vol/com sector to encourage sustainability
5	Develop contract management skills within NR community partnerships
6	Identify potential for social enterprises / service contracting through Community Planning
7	Provide advice to NR community partnerships on business start-ups
8	Attain and implement quality standards to enable vol/com organisations to secure service delivery contracts

	Actions suggested by the review
9	Implement Funding Code of Practice
	Objective
3.1.d	Encourage each community partnership in the NR areas to attain at least level 3 on the Active Partners or Community Economic Development Frameworks by 2007.
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Introduce the Active Partners / CED framework as a facilitated process to all NR community partnerships
2	Implement the Active Partners / CED framework with NR community partnerships
3	Produce and monitor Active partners / CED framework action plans
	Objective
3.1.e	To increase by 20% the number of people who participate in local voluntary and community sector organisations by 2007
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Conduct a base-line survey of community activity / involvement, using a methodology such as 'Assessing Community Strengths'
2	Establish a Volunteer Bureau for Rotherham
3	Promote opportunities for volunteering at Community Planning 'events' and via communication channels (e.g. Council Matters etc.)

	Aim
3.2	To develop effective engagement between agencies and communities
	Objective
3.2 a	Create opportunities and structures for community involvement and participation in Neighbourhood Renewal and Management, which increase the influence of communities in the renewal process.
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Produce and implement a partnership Community Involvement and Participation Strategy
2	Consult with local Community Partnerships and communities of interest in the Neighbourhood Renewal areas and establish clear, accessible and appropriate Neighbourhood Management structures
3	Increase the influence of local community partnerships and communities of interest within the NR areas, year on year, by implementing relevant action points from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Community Empowerment Network Performance Management Framework Action Plan - and the Active Partners Framework Action Plan
	Objective
3.2 b	To strengthen the links between the local partnerships, the Community Empowerment Network and the Rotherham Partnership
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Promote the Community Empowerment Network and encourage involvement in other thematic networks linked to the LSP
2	Publish a minimum of two articles / postings per NR area per year, utilising the CEN website and newsletters to share the achievements of the Neighbourhood Renewal area partnerships and partner initiatives in NR areas.

	Objective
3.2 c	Establish clear Community Planning processes for communities of interest to facilitate effective engagement
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Identify and implement ways to engage the communities of interest in Community Planning, and include Action Plans and a time frame for doing so in the Community Planning Model.
2	The Council and other service providers to agree ways to take account of and respond to Community Planning priorities when service planning, setting budgets etc.
	Objective
3.2 d	Increase by 20% by 2007 the number of people in neighbourhood renewal areas who feel that service providers / statutory agencies are good at involving the public in the decision making process
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Baseline the percentage of people in the NR areas who feel that service providers / statutory agencies are good at involving the public in the decision making process
2	Monitor the satisfaction of participants involved in the Neighbourhood Renewal and Management structures, evaluate responses and implement improvements
3	Adopt / develop best practice in communications – marketing achievements, feeding back to the NR communities on progress, initiatives, improvements, constraints etc. – and seek external accreditation / GOYH / NRU approval for these communication mechanisms
	Objective
3.2 e	Implement the Compact and Codes of Good Practice between service providers and the voluntary and community sector by June 2005

	Actions suggested by the review
1	Compact implementation Group to report to the CDIP and LSP Board on the Impact Assessment and the Action Plans to ensure compliance with the approved Codes of Good Practice.
2	LSP to adopt, market and implement the revised Codes of Good Practice
	Aim
3.3	To provide quality community development support at all levels of operation
	Objective
3.3 a	Implement an appropriate performance management framework, to monitor and evaluate the delivery of community development outcomes
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Prepare a concise statement of community development principles and values, with examples of good practice and the outcomes community development can secure, as a tool for partner agencies, communities, and for new staff.
2	Identify staff with supporting roles in community development and the respective contributions they can make to community development outcomes at all levels, e.g. Young People's Service staff engaging young people as a community of interest. Include these contributions within the performance management framework.
3	Each partner agency to assign a member of staff to act as a community development champion and liaison officer to support the adoption of community development as a way of working throughout their organisation.
4	Establish a sub-group of the CDIP – including the CD champions – to find ways to address any gaps in community development support across the four levels of operation.

	Objective
3.3 b	Increase, year on year, the number of staff involved in community development with accredited skills / relevant qualifications
	Actions suggested by the review
1	The community development champions / liaison officers in partner agencies to identify and promote joint training opportunities to encourage a broad understanding of community development / the development of specific skills etc.
2	All future funding bids / establishment costs for community development posts to include an adequate staff training budget.
	Objective
3.3 c	Increase by 5% per year the level of satisfaction, of local groups, partnerships, networks and agencies, with the community development support they receive.
	Actions suggested by the review
1	Implement satisfaction survey amongst local groups, partnerships, networks and agencies (i.e. all levels of operation) to baseline satisfaction with the community development support provided.
2	Analyse survey results to find ways of improving rates of satisfaction and implement improvements.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Community Planning/Social Inclusion
2.	Date:	19 th November, 2004
3.	Title:	Rotherham Council Social Inclusion Position Statement (All wards affected)
4.	Programme Area:	Chief Executive's Department (Director of Neighbourhoods is the identified CMT lead)

5. Summary

In response to the Year Ahead Commitment 19, this report and the attached paper (appendix 1) seeks to outline:

- Council's current strategic areas of activity in addressing social inclusion
- The main social inclusion policy challenges facing the council

The paper also puts forward strategic policy options to enable the Council to ensure social inclusion is being achieved in Rotherham by itself and through joint work with partners.

6. Recommendations

- 1. Note the report and the conclusions put forward.**
- 2. Agree to the development of a Corporate Social Inclusion Framework to enable the Council to establish a common understanding and vision of social inclusion and identify clear objectives and performance measures for achieving this.**
- 3. Acknowledge that the Social Inclusion Framework will need to be shaped by the emerging new priorities for the Council (and LSP).**
- 4. Request that further work be done to strengthen the statistical baseline with additional information to ensure the strategic framework is based on all available evidence.**
- 5. Agree to receive a further report in February 2005 outlining progress, and presenting a draft Social Inclusion Framework.**

7. Proposals and Details

The Year Ahead Statement for 2004-05 sets out a commitment to update the Council's Social Inclusion and Anti Poverty Strategy, and seeks a report to CMT outlining the outcome of a review of current policy and next steps.

The attached position statement provides an outline of the national and regional agenda on social inclusion and how the Council is responding locally.

The paper explores future Government agendas on social inclusion and how Rotherham should respond. In March 2004 the Government's, Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) published a comprehensive analysis of the impact of Government policy in tackling social inclusion so far, *Breaking the Cycle: Taking Stock and Looking to the Future*.

The analysis suggests that there will be a smaller number of people affected by social exclusion but that their exclusion will be deeper as they would experience more multiple disadvantage and a greater degree of exclusion from participating in mainstream social activities. It is important therefore that resources are targeted effectively and that service delivery is responsive to the needs of those who are most excluded.

The paper recognizes that a large number of existing strategies and plans contribute to addressing social exclusion in the Borough and deliver key elements of it – such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, with its geographical focus, and strategies in relation to equalities and cohesion. However it highlights the need for an overarching strategy (or framework) that brings together these various strategies and plans into a common vision, objectives and targets. This will lead to a more co-ordinated approach and a more robust performance management system to ensure we are maximizing outcomes and quality of life for Rotherham's most vulnerable people.

8. Finance

The development of agreed corporate social inclusion objectives and priorities would enable the Council to make more effective use of mainstream expenditure to tackle the key social exclusion issues in the Borough. It will serve to influence:

- future external funding regimes in the Borough
- the Council's corporate budget planning process by identifying the agreed priorities and projects where RMBC financial support is sought.
- the allocation of grant aid to voluntary and community sector organisations.
- targeting resources towards communities of interest and geographic communities.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Although the Council is supporting and promoting activities that encourage social inclusion, with an absence of clear strategic social inclusion objectives, priorities or mechanisms for measuring our progress, it will be difficult for the Council to ascertain whether we are maximising impact for all residents in the Borough.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Community Strategy and Corporate Plan: Social Inclusion is an essential element in working towards the current Community Strategy and Corporate Plan (in relation to the Community Strategy driving principle of Access and opportunity, and in relation to the Corporate Plan value of putting people first, and priority of a place for everyone)

Social inclusion is also integral to the emerging Vision and key priorities being developed following discussions at the Cabinet-CMT Away Day on 1st October. In the context of the emerging priorities, social inclusion cuts across all priorities, and is an essential component of the cross cutting theme of “Fairness” that states (in draft) that achieving equal opportunities, access to services and the necessities of life are everyone's rights. Indeed, the suggested framework for Social Inclusion will make a significant contribution to the effective delivery of the theme of “Fairness”.

Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy: The NRS will contribute to social inclusion priorities by aiming to ensure that quality of life improves for people living in Rotherham's most deprived neighbourhoods and to enable everyone in the Borough to realise their potential. It focuses on social inclusion issues such as improved job opportunities, learning and training provision, improved health, reduced crime, improved housing and local environments and strong communities.

Sustainability: In order to achieve a sustainable Rotherham with sustainable communities the Council needs to ensure it is promoting and enabling social inclusion for all its residents. Social, economic and cultural barriers all need to be removed if quality of life around aspects such as community, housing, and employment are to be made sustainable for everyone.

Equalities Issues: The Council is currently developing its Equalities and Diversity Policy and statement. Equalities work is an essential component of achieving social inclusion.

Performance Indicators: The report highlights the lack of some performance measures around social inclusion in key strategic documents such as The Corporate Plan. The Social Inclusion Framework will include the development of a suite of key corporate social inclusion objectives and performance indicators to measure the progress of each objective.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Background papers:

Wigan's Partnership Social Inclusion Framework.

Breaking the Cycle: Taking Stock and Looking to the Future - Social Exclusion Unit, March 2004

Consultation:

Once agreement has been reached to move forward with the development of a Social Inclusion Framework a programme of consultation across the Council will be developed. Consultation mechanisms such as Youth Parliament, Reachout and other Forums will be utilised to enable us to gauge the public's priorities around social inclusion.

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RMBC Position Statement on Social Inclusion

1 Introduction

This paper seeks to outline the Council's key strategic areas of activity to address social inclusion, the main social inclusion policy challenges facing the Council and puts forward strategic policy options to enable the Council to ensure Social Inclusion is being achieved in Rotherham by itself and through joint work with its partners. It draws on internal practice and activity, the findings of previous research and inspections and an examination of 'best practice'.

2 What is Social Inclusion?

The Government's Social Exclusion Unit's definition of social inclusion is "activity aimed at removing the barriers to enable individuals to participate effectively in economic, social and cultural life". This definition however is intended to be flexible, reflecting the complexity of social inclusion and that it has different meanings for different people. The Government's Social Exclusion Unit and the European Union have identified thirteen main groups of people who are at most risk of social exclusion. These include the long-term unemployed; those living on low incomes; disabled people; immigrants (refugees and asylum seekers); people with poor qualifications and ethnic background.

Within these groups the impact and intensity of social exclusion varies considerably. A small but significant number are affected by an extreme form of social exclusion known as multiple deprivation. This is when people suffer from a series of inter-related problems such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, and ill health and family breakdown. The cumulative impact of multiple deprivation tends to be disproportionately borne by certain neighbourhoods and groups. It is however not confined solely to these groups and neighbourhoods, anyone can be affected by aspects of social exclusion and at any point in their life.

This issue is of special significance to Rotherham as its social exclusion statistics are unacceptably high and above the national average. It represents, therefore, a major challenge and opportunity.

3 National, Regional and local policy context

3.1 National

Social Inclusion came to the fore in the late 1990s as evidence mounted that not everyone was equally benefiting from improvements in skills, wealth, employment and health, and as a consequence the relative gap between the most deprived people and places and the rest of the UK was widening. There was a recognition that much more intensive interventions were required if the gap

was to be narrowed and ensure that all could fully contribute to and share the benefits of economic and social growth.

Since it took office, the present Government has consistently identified Social Inclusion as a top priority. Its key policy response was the establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) to research the extent of the challenge of social exclusion, and support national and local agencies to develop policies and programmes that help alleviate it, such as the introduction of Neighbourhood Renewal Floor Targets and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. A wide range of other Government policies, programmes and legislation such as the New Deal programme, Sure Start and Race Relations Act, has supported the work of the Social Exclusion Unit.

The Government has made it clear that social inclusion will continue to be a top priority for some time to come. It recently published a comprehensive analysis of the impact of Government policy in tackling social exclusion so far, *Breaking the Cycle: Taking Stock and Looking to the Future, SEU March 2004*. This recognises that whilst significant improvements are being made with for example 1.8 million people brought into work since 1997 there is still much more work to be done. It identified the following as groups of people helped relatively little by measures to promote social inclusion:

- unskilled adults
- people with chronic illnesses or disabilities
- some ethnic groups including Pakistanis and Bangladeshis
- young adults facing homelessness and unemployment
- vulnerable and isolated pensioners
- people who tend to move frequently such as travelers and those leaving institutions such as the armed forces and prison as some of the key challenges ahead.

This commitment is further underlined in a raft of other policy announcements and initiatives such as 'Every Child Counts', Sustainable Communities and the 2004 Comprehensive Spending Review, with a particular emphasis on reducing health inequalities, children, promoting cohesion, re-connecting the disabled into the workforce and safer communities.

3.2 Regional

Social Inclusion Policy is also a priority at a regional level, this is reflected in Yorkshire Forward's Regional Economic Strategy, which identifies social inclusion and diversity as one of its six cross cutting themes. The Regional Director of Health has also recently produced a consultation report on the state of the Region's health in Yorkshire and the Humber.

The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Assembly's strategy "Part of the Picture" sets out a plan of action to ensure that the Region is a place "where all people

enjoy good quality of life, no matter who they are or where they live". It has also recently undertaken a scrutiny review of Yorkshire Forward's approach to Social Inclusion.

3.3 Local

The Government recognises that through the power of well-being to promote environmental, social and economic well-being and through the Shared Priorities it has agreed with the LGA that local authorities have a key and central role to play in promoting social inclusion. Many are investing heavily in a number of policies and programs aimed at promoting social inclusion and addressing social exclusion.

Future CPA Inspections are also more likely to place much more emphasis on local authority's efforts to address social inclusion as local authority responses to cross cutting issues like this increasingly come to the fore. The Council will need to take into account the following shared public service delivery priorities when developing its social inclusion objectives /priorities:

- raising standards across our schools
- improving the quality of life of older people and of children, young people and families at risk
- promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities
- creating safer and stronger communities
- transforming our local environment
- meeting transport needs more effectively
- promoting the economic vitality of localities

4 **Social Inclusion in Rotherham**

The issue of social inclusion is of particular significance to Rotherham. Although there has been significant improvement in recent years and a narrowing in the gap, levels of social exclusion in the Borough continue to be unacceptably high and generally above the national average, good examples include:

- Rotherham and the wider South Yorkshire sub-region has one of the lowest levels of GDP in the UK
- It ranks 59th most deprived English local authority area on the national Index of Local Deprivation.
- Average earnings are only about 80% of the national average

Furthermore, the Borough generally has a higher proportion of those groups most at risk of social exclusion:

- Low skill levels, with the proportion of the adults with no qualifications at 36.8% far higher than the national average at 29.1%
- Rotherham's ethnic (non-white) population has increased by 54% between 1991 and 2001 (from just over 5,000 to 7,700) and now represents 3.1% of the total population (2% in 1991).
- 768 asylum seekers in houses contracted to the Home Office since April 2000
- An aging population (the official estimate is that the over 75 age bracket will increase by over 12,000 people (or 68%) within 25 years.
- Average life expectancy is well below the national average and death from heart disease 39% above the norm
- There has been an increase of 14,500 people stating they suffered from a limiting long-term illness over the 10 year period.
- Rotherham continues to have high rates of teenage pregnancies compared to the national average, although the numbers are now falling

The cumulative impact of social exclusion in the Borough continues to be focussed in certain geographical areas such as in and around the Town Centre and groups including the unemployed, homeless, BME, single mothers, people with ill health, older adults on low incomes, asylum seekers and those with low skills. Its scale also means that Rotherham is not making most of the potential of its human and social capital.

5 RMBC's approach to Social Inclusion

There is a long and strong commitment to reducing social exclusion in the Council and amongst its partners.

The LSP's Community Strategy identifies reducing inequalities as a key action as well as a guiding principle together with access and opportunity, and puts forward a series of challenging targets aimed at reducing inequalities around employment, health, housing, crime and communities.

This is developed further in key partnership documents such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, Crime & Disorder Strategy, 14-19 Year Old Strategy and the emerging Community Cohesion Partnership Strategic Framework for Action.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is a key component of the LSP's Community Strategy. It sets out priorities for addressing the root causes of deprivation in the Borough's most deprived areas and improving quality of life at

neighbourhood level through improved co-ordination of local services. The focus of the strategy is on communities of place and as such will play an important role in addressing issues of social exclusion in our most deprived neighbourhoods.

One of the Council's political priorities ("A Place for Everyone") in the Corporate Plan directly relates to Social Inclusion, and a number have a strong social inclusion dimension to them. It is important to note however that work is currently underway to review and refocus the Council's priorities, and the emerging priority relating to "Fairness" provides an important focus for the Council's approach to social inclusion.

Currently, the Council has a Cabinet Member with the strategic political lead for Social Inclusion issues. Other Cabinet Members lead on some of the more operational aspects of the Council's social inclusion agenda - the Cabinet Member for Economic and Development Services for example leads on the employability agenda.

There is a strong commitment to social inclusion in other key Council plans and initiatives including the Regeneration Plan, Adult Modernisation Strategy; Affordable Warmth Strategy, Adult Modernisation Strategy, emerging Equalities & Diversity Policy, and Supporting People Strategy and internal Programme Area and Service Plans. Most are focused at particular deprived areas such as those targeted within the NRS or groups such as the Homelessness Strategy.

The Council has agreed a Local Performance Service Agreement with the Government, which includes 'stretch' targets, many of which are relevant to social inclusion such as narrowing the gap between Rotherham's employment rate and that of the national average.

There are several external funding regimes with a strong social inclusion focus that allocate special funds to initiatives and projects in the Borough, such as Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), Objective 1, Surestart, Children's Fund and the Council's own Community and Economic Regeneration Budget (CERB). Many of these also have associated strategies and action plans. An analysis will be undertaken to map these Council plans and services across the groups most at risk from social exclusion as described in the introduction. The purpose of this analysis will be to assess whether these strategies and services do address social inclusion and to what degree.

A number of structures have been developed to help co-ordinate the activities of programme area and partner agencies around social inclusion. These are mainly at the operational level but include some more strategic groups such as Community Development and Involvement Partnership and the Community Cohesion Partnership within Rotherham Partnership and Regeneration Core Officer Group. The Chief Executive's Department has a part-time Policy Officer

(Social Inclusion) who leads on and co-ordinates strategic corporate and partnership activity to promote the Council's social inclusion objectives.

The Council has sought to develop its knowledge base about the extent and degree of social exclusion through the Borough so that interventions can be targeted more effectively. This is evidenced through initiatives such as the multi-agency Neighbourhood Statistics Project based in the Chief Executives Office, and the recent decision to appoint a Community Involvement Officer to strengthen existing inclusion activities. Parallel to this it has sought to strengthen its mechanisms for sharing information across Programme Areas and with partners.

Through extensive lobbying and campaigning activities, the Council has been active in taking forward social inclusion in the Borough. A good example being its actions and concerns about the operation of the Government's miners' health compensation scheme.

The Council can point to where its activities have delivered real improvements such as raising educational attainment, reducing crime and the fear of crime, support for older people and getting people into work.

It is also reflected in the many national awards the Council has received for its Social Inclusion activities such as for the work of the Get Real Team, Supporting People Service and the Compact it developed with the voluntary sector. It is also reflected in its Beacon Council status for its activities in removing barriers to work, and the recent 'two star' Good score by the Audit Commission for the Council's Regeneration Services.

6 Areas for Improvement

Although the overall impression is good and we are improving services that are making a real impact in promoting social inclusion, the Audit Commission's recent inspection of the Council's social, economic and environmental activities, has highlighted a number of areas of potential improvement:

- less success in tackling the deep-seated social deprivation that still persists;
- there is a need to co-ordinate the efforts of separate parts of the council, so that physical and environmental regeneration is fully integrated with social inclusion, to ensure the maximum outcome in improved wellbeing for residents;
- bring together the range of information the council has showing projects and outputs that are intended to address these long-term problems;
- monitor the impact of activities in reducing inequalities between neighbourhoods

Two areas of improvement could be concluded as being:

1. Integration:

The Council has agreed to a wide number of key strategic objectives and actions for social inclusion set -out in various plans and strategies. These however have not been brought together into a single, clear and manageable set of key Council-wide corporate social inclusion priorities for action. The absence of clear social inclusion priorities and targets makes it difficult for the Council to articulate clearly what strategic improvements it is seeking to bring about, and for Programme Areas and partners to concentrate and coordinate their efforts and actions behind the Council's social inclusion objectives to maximise their impact and effectiveness. This issue of integration is not helped on occasions by poor linkages (some plans are very quiet on their contribution to addressing social exclusion and poverty more generally); duplication (e.g. Maltby appears to be covered by more than one development plan) and inconsistencies (similar plans and strategies identify different strategic target groups and areas e.g. Objective 1 Programme and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy).

2. Gaps in quantifiable outcomes and targets

Much of the Council's social inclusion activities can demonstrate clear and positive outcomes for local people. However in some areas it is currently difficult for the Council to show impact for example in relation to community development, Area Assemblies or neighbourhood management. This absence of measurement makes it difficult for the council to show how these services contribute to social inclusion and wider regeneration.

Moreover, while the Council can readily show the impact of individual projects, it has limited information to demonstrate the collective impact of say its initiatives aimed at reducing health inequalities or inequalities between neighbourhoods.

Again, there are also examples of inconsistencies such as the Council's commitment in the Corporate Plan and many other documents to community planning, and its target in the Corporate Plan that shows a reduction in the number of groups its supports to enhance their capacity to become involved in the regeneration of their area. This is against a background where such measurement of impact is becoming increasingly important. The Corporate Plan also identifies a key programme of work around building community cohesion but has no direct performance indicators to measure this area of work, nor does it have any direct equalities indicators.

7 Arguments

In conclusion the following arguments for developing a stronger mechanism to promote social inclusion can be put forward:

- The Council has produced, or is party to, a wide range of plans and strategies that deliver key aspects of social inclusion. Key examples include the Cohesion Strategy, Corporate Equalities and Diversity Policy, and the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. There are however many strategies and plans that contribute to social inclusion beyond these. As a result, there is no single document that brings together these commitments into an overarching set of key priorities and aims for action that outlines the Council's key role and contribution to addressing Social Inclusion, in support of the Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.
- Linked to the above, there is a lack of definition, objectives and targets. The lack of a single definition and key corporate priorities for the Council makes it more difficult for partners and Programme Areas to pool their efforts behind a coherent set of aims and targets for social inclusion.
- Although the research and statistical evidence base is generally good, there are some gaps in our knowledge base, particularly around some communities of interest. For example in relation to the BME community.
- There is an inconsistency in the existence of and quality of performance indicators to measure and track progress on social inclusion, and measure outcomes in some key areas, most notably in relation to measuring quality of life for some communities of interest.
- There is scope to strengthen joined up working and pooling of resources around social inclusion to maximize impact.

8 Options

1. Develop a Corporate Social Inclusion Framework for the Council. We can look to Wigan MBC as an example of how this is being developed. Wigan (which has Beacon Council in this field) has produced a Social Inclusion framework. This was in response to concerns that although there was a lot of social Inclusion activity across the Council but there was a lack of focus, direction, performance management and linkages. This paper has identified the same issues for Rotherham Council.

The Wigan framework outlines:

- A vision for Wigan
- A set of key social inclusion objectives
- Priority actions
- The Council's key role and actions to deliver the wider social inclusion priorities, as contained in its various plans and strategies (including its Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy).

2. Development of a Partnership Document – either via the LSP or bi-laterally such as with the PCT.
3. Strengthen and build on existing or emerging Council strategies or policies such as Community Cohesion Strategy, Equalities & Diversity Policy, Sustainable Development Framework and Skills and Life Long Learning Strategy to strengthen the social inclusion elements. The risk with this approach, however, is that certain elements of social inclusion may be lost in their wider context.

9 Conclusions

The preferred approach is to produce a Social Inclusion Framework for the Council similar to that developed by Wigan MBC. This will act as a high level document to provide a focus and framework for all the numerous and diverse Council social inclusion related plans and strategies.

Its development will be shaped by the emerging new priorities for the Council (and LSP), as well as existing priorities within the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and other key strategies. It will outline the Council's key social inclusion objectives and aims in support of their delivery. Its development will also enable us to take stock of our existing service provision, identify any improvements needed and any gaps in current provision, to ensure that the Council maximises its contribution to social inclusion.

In developing the framework the Council will need to work closely with partners, notably Rotherham Partnership. In taking this work forward, it may be appropriate to share our emerging framework with a view to it being adopted on a partnership-wide basis in due course.

It would also be timely to enable us to take advantage of and develop locally the Government's findings in its Taking Stock document due to be published.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member and Advisers for Community Planning and Social Inclusion,
2.	Date:	19th November 2004
3.	Title:	Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum
4.	Programme Area:	All

5. Summary

This report considers RMBC liaison with Voluntary Action Rotherham and ways of improving it

6. Recommendations

That the Chair of Cabinet Member and Advisers for Community Planning and Social Inclusion, and his advisors meet with the chair, Chief Executive and nominated members of VAR on a biannual basis according to the remit shown at Appendix 1.

7. Proposals and Details

At the meeting of Cabinet Member and Advisers for Community Planning and Social Inclusion, on 22nd October 2004 reference was made to a liaison group consisting of members of the council and representatives of VAR aimed at improving communications between the 2 bodies.

At the 22nd October meeting there was some confusion as to whether this liaison group had been set up and/or whether it had met. Officers were asked to investigate. It was recognised that such a body would prove valuable to improving communication between the council and VAR, and to help understand the needs and pressures each other. Officers were asked to develop proposals to expedite this.

The former Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel meeting of 7 January 2003, (minute 89 refers) says

“A Liaison Group meeting with Senior Management and the Board of Voluntary Action Rotherham, called by the Cabinet Member (Community Planning and Social Inclusion), welcomed involvement from Elected Members in looking at the agreement between Voluntary Action Rotherham and the Council in the overall funding of core and individual project costs. All opportunities to strengthen the agreement should be considered.”

Taken in context with the full minute it is apparent that an ad hoc group had been brought together to manage the difficulties VAR was then going through. This group however, does not appear to have been a formally constituted group, neither does it appear to have met on a regular basis afterwards, if at all.

Circumstances today are markedly different. VAR is a stable organisation with a clear direction and with a strong management team. However,

- a) the principles of partnership working are, if anything, stronger now than in early 2003
- b) communications between RMBC and VAR are even more important due to the increasing importance of the voluntary sector in Rotherham.
- c) There are a number of areas where increased understanding and coordination would benefit both parties.

It is therefore proposed that a RMBC/VAR Liaison Panel be established as per the proposed remit attached at Appendix 1

8. Finance

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Whilst the voluntary sector can change at great pace the establishment of a Liaison panel can only help to smooth any transition whilst maintaining services

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Conforms to the partnership ethos of the council and will help in establishing performance levels.

Will promote through its work the themes of the Community Strategy and the council's Corporate Plan

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Previous meeting minutes of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel meeting of 7 January 2003

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Appendix 1

Remit

The purpose of the RMBC/VAR Liaison Forum is to ensure there is full discussion and communication of issues of mutual interest which can help improve the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of services being provided to the people of Rotherham by VAR and, through support of VAR, RMBC.

Meeting: Meetings of the Forum will be held bi-annually

Representatives:

Rotherham MBC The Cabinet Member and Advisers for Community Planning and Social Inclusion, Senior officers of RMBC

Voluntary Action Rotherham, The Chair and its Board members; the Chief Executive;

Roles

- a) To promote good Communication and liaison between Rotherham MBC and Voluntary Action Rotherham
- b) To discuss the level of Funding and support for Voluntary Action Rotherham by RMBC
- c) To discuss and promote a Service Level Agreement partnership with s for Voluntary Action Rotherham and its initiatives
- d) To consult on, monitor and evaluate joint projects and initiatives between Voluntary Action Rotherham and Rotherham MBC
- e) To promote development of joint initiatives between Voluntary Action Rotherham and Rotherham MBC
- f) To promote partnership working between Voluntary Action Rotherham and Rotherham MBC