

## DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL SCRUTINY PANEL

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

**Date:** Thursday, 4 December  
2008

**Time:** 4.00 p.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. Apologies and Communications.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Questions from members of the public and the press.

#### **For Decision:-**

6. The Voluntary Sector (Presentation by Janet Wheatley, Chief Executive, Voluntary Action Rotherham)
7. Working with Parish Councils – Part II Review (report herewith) (Pages 1 - 25)
8. Debt Recovery Scrutiny Review (report herewith) (Pages 26 - 28)
9. Chesterhill Intensive Neighbourhood Management Pilot – ‘Moving Towards Sustainability’ (report herewith) (Pages 29 - 33)

#### **For Monitoring:-**

10. Neighbourhood Renewal Transitional Funding Programme N2008-11 (report herewith and presentation by Ian Squires, Regeneration Funding Manager) (Pages 34 - 40)

**Minutes - For Information:-**

11. Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2008 (herewith). (Pages 41 - 46)
12. Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement held on 24th November, 2008 (herewith) (Pages 47 - 52)
13. Minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 26th September, 10th and 24th October and 7th November, 2008 (see Delegated Powers Book pages 1T to 32T).

**Date of Next Meeting:-  
Thursday, 15 January 2009**

**Membership:-**

Chairman – Councillor Austen  
Vice-Chairman – Councillor J. Hamilton  
Councillors:- Cutts, Foden, Dodson, Johnston, Lakin, Littleboy, Mannion, Parker,  
Pickering and Tweed

**Co-opted Members**

Debbie Heath (Voluntary Action Rotherham)  
Taiba Yasseen (REMA)  
Councillor A. Buckley (Parish Council Representative)  
Councillor E. Shaw (Parish Council Representative)

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
--

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	4th December, 2008
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	Working with Parish Councils – Part II Review
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	Chief Executive's

## **5. Summary**

A Scrutiny Review was carried out in 2004 to look at the working relationship between Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and local Town/Parish Councils. It was agreed that it would be useful to find out how the relationship between the two layers of local government has developed during the four years since the review, and what improvements might still be made.

## **6. Recommendations**

The Panel is asked to:-

- **Agree the 11 recommendations of the Review which are arranged under the sub-headings of Communication, Training and Empowerment. The recommendations are listed on the Review, but a summary is provided below:**

**Key recommendations on Communication include updating the Parish/town Councils website, creating induction packs for Clerks and providing a checklist of RMBC services available.**

**On Training, recommendations are made to make RMBC Officer training available to Clerks, include information on Parish/Town Councils in the RMBC Officer induction, and elect a Parish/Town Council representative to sit on the Elected Member Learning & Development Panel.**

**Two recommendations are made on Empowering Parish/Town Councils by developing the Parish Network and look at supporting a South Yorkshire wide network of Clerks.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

In 2004, the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel undertook a review, "Working with Parish Councils", which examined the Council's then relationship with Town and Parish councils in the borough and made recommendations to improve the way the two tiers of local government work together.

It was agreed at the meeting of this Panel on 24th July 2008 that it would be useful to find out how the relationship between the two layers of local government has developed during the four years since the review, and what improvements might still be made. A working group was therefore set up consisting of the following Panel Members:

- Cllr Jane Austen
- Cllr Alan Buckley

It was agreed that the group would focus on the following six points:

- a) Look at the recommendations of the first review, Cabinet and Corporate Management Team responses. Have all actions been met?
- b) Revisit the questionnaire to Parish Councils and see if anything has changed
- c) Interview/questionnaire to directorates to find out if relationship has changed
- d) Look at the effectiveness of the Parish Network and Joint Working Group
- e) Talk with those Councils with Quality Status to gauge their desire to see a changed relationship
- f) Look at good practice from other areas.

An updated questionnaire - based on the one used as part of the 2004 Review - was sent to all Parish/Town Councils in August 2008 to ask about their experiences of working with RMBC. Of the 29 Parish and Town Councils in the borough, 15 responded giving just over a 50% response rate. A questionnaire was also distributed to key officers working with Parish/Town Councils.

The key findings were as follows:

- Parish/Town Councils mostly feel that working relationships with RMBC have improved but that there is still work to be done.
- The increased use of email in communicating with Parish/Town Councils was widely welcomed.
- A significant percentage of RMBC officers (36%) felt that there is overlap between the Parish/Town Councils and Area Assemblies.

- There is still a need for better understanding in some Parish/Town Councils about how RMBC processes and services work.
- The Joint Charter, Joint Working Group and Parish Network were all identified as areas of good practice in Rotherham.
- It is felt that the Joint Working Group and Parish Network have been led by RMBC officers rather than by Parish/Town Councils.
- Three Parish/Town Councils in Rotherham have achieved the Quality Parish Status.

### **8. Finance**

The Review was undertaken within the Scrutiny Services budget. There should be no further financial ramifications.

### **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The panel risks failing to meet its targets in the Scrutiny Forward Plan if it does not undertake the prescribed number of reviews it has already agreed to undertake. A review of the relationship with town and parish councils was one of those agreed.

### **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The Proud theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy states “Active citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. ...It will be made up of strong, sustainable and cohesive communities, both of place and interest and there will be many opportunities for people to be involved in civic life and local decision making.” Developing our relationship with town and parish councils will help to sustain this ambition.

### **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

- Annual report of the Joint Working Group 2007/08
- Final report of the scrutiny review “Working With Parish Councils” – August 2004

#### **Contact Names:**

Emily Knowles, Project Officer, x2795

**WORKING WITH PARISH COUNCILS****PART II REVIEW**

October 2008

**CONTENTS**

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1 ORIGINAL CONCERNS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.1 Background.....	4
<b>2 TERMS OF REFERENCE</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3 OVERVIEW OF POLICY FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>5</b>
3.1 National Level.....	5
3.2 Local Level.....	5
<b>4 BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>5 FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
5.1 Questionnaires to Parish Councils.....	6
5.2 Interviews with Parish Councils .....	7
5.3 Questionnaires to RMBC Officers.....	8
5.4 Interviews with RMBC Officers .....	8
<b>6 EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE</b> .....	<b>9</b>
6.1 Learning from other Authorities.....	9
6.2 Good practice in Rotherham .....	9
6.3 Joint Working Charter .....	9
6.4 Quality Parish Status .....	9
6.5 Joint Working Group .....	10
6.6 Parish Network .....	10
<b>7 RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>11</b>
7.1 Communications .....	11
7.2 Training.....	11
7.3 Empowerment.....	12
<b>8 THANKS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>9 APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Summary of Recommendations from the 2004 Scrutiny Review “Working with Parish Councils” .....	13
<b>Appendix 2</b> .....	<b>16</b>
PARISH COUNCILS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT WORKING WITH RMBC .....	16
<b>Appendix 3</b> .....	<b>20</b>
DIRECTORATE RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT WORKING WITH PARISH COUNCILS.....	20

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Scrutiny Review was carried out in 2004 to look at the working relationship between Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and local Town/Parish Councils. It was agreed that it would be useful to find out how the relationship between the two layers of local government has developed during the four years since the review, and what improvements might still be made.

The review group was made up of the following members:

### **Elected Members**

- Chair: Cllr Jane Austen
- Cllr Alan Buckley

During the review, the group invited key officers with experience of working with Parish/Town Councils to an interview to discuss in more depth some of the issues that were raised in the questionnaires.

Their help and co-operation with the review is gratefully acknowledged.

### Summary of Findings:

- Parish/Town Councils mostly feel that working relationships with RMBC have improved but that there is still work to be done.
- The increased use of email in communicating with Parish/Town Councils was widely welcomed.
- A significant percentage of RMBC officers (36%) felt that there is overlap between the Parish/Town Councils and Area Assemblies.
- There is still a need for better understanding in some Parish/Town Councils about how RMBC processes and services work.
- The Joint Charter, Joint Working Group and Parish Network were all identified as areas of good practice in Rotherham.
- It is felt that the Joint Working Group and Parish Network have been led by RMBC officers rather than by Parish/Town Councils.
- Three Parish/Town Councils in Rotherham have achieved the Quality Parish Status.

### Key Recommendations:

#### **Recommendations**

##### **7.1 Communications**

- 7.1.1 A checklist is compiled of the services available to Parish/Town Councils from each RMBC directorate. This should be circulated to all Clerks and made available on the Rotherham Parish & Town Councils website.
- 7.1.2 An induction pack containing information on RMBC services and contacts is prepared for all parish clerks in the Borough.

## **Recommendations**

- 7.1.3 A calendar of meetings of all parish councils is prepared annually and distributed across the council in order that RMBC officers consulting with Parish Councils do so in a timely fashion.
- 7.1.4 The Rotherham Parish & Town Councils website develops a member only section and includes: a list of Frequently Asked Questions; a clerk/member chat room; RMBC key officer contact details; the Joint Working Group Annual Work plan.
- 7.1.5 Contact is made with Parish/Town Councils to establish which ones are waiting for support to set up a website and to give them a timescale of when this can happen.
- 7.1.6 In order to further improve relations and identify specific issues, a meeting is held with each Parish/Town Council to discuss what RMBC is doing to promote engagement with Parish/Town Councils and to encourage a closer working relationship.

## **7.2 Training**

- 7.2.1 A Parish/Town Councils representative is elected to sit on the Member Learning and Development Panel.
- 7.2.2 RMBC officer Training is made available for Parish/Town Council clerks where appropriate, and advertised to Parish/Town Councils with plenty of notice given.
- 7.2.3 That Induction for RMBC officers should include a section on the role of Parish/Town Councils and their relationship with RMBC – where appropriate.

## **7.3 Empowerment**

- 7.3.1 Further development work is undertaken with Parish Councils so as to allow for the Parish Network and, where appropriate, Area Assembly Parish network meetings to become more Parish/Town Council led.
- 7.3.2 Investigations are made to gauge the level of interest amongst Parish/Town Council clerks to develop a South Yorkshire wide network. Appropriate support is provided if required, for example by hosting an initial meeting.



## **1 ORIGINAL CONCERNS**

- Why Members wanted to look at this issue.

### **1.1 Background**

In 2004, the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel undertook a review, "Working with Parish Councils", which examined the Council's then relationship with Town and Parish councils in the borough and made recommendations to improve the way the two tiers of local government work together.

1.2 It was agreed at the meeting of this Panel on 24th July 2008 that it would be useful to find out how the relationship between the two layers of local government has developed during the four years since the review, and what improvements might still be made.

### **1.3 Council priorities**

The proud theme of the Community Strategy states "Active citizenship and democracy will underpin how Rotherham works. [...] It will be made up of strong, sustainable and cohesive communities, both of place and interest and there will be many opportunities for people to be involved in civic life and local decision making." Developing a good relationship between the borough council and parish/town councils will help to sustain this ambition.

## **2 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

2.1 At the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2008 a Scrutiny Review group was set up consisting of the following panel members:

- Cllr Jane Austen
- Cllr Alan Buckley

2.2 It was agreed that the group would look at the following six points:

- Look at the recommendations of the first review, Cabinet and Corporate Management Team responses. Have all actions been met?
- Look at the effectiveness of the Parish Network and Joint Working Group
- Revisit the questionnaire to Parish Councils and see if anything has changed
- Interview/questionnaire to directorates to find out if relationship has changed
- Talk with those Councils with Quality Status to gauge their desire to see a changed relationship
- Good practice from other areas.

### 3 OVERVIEW OF POLICY FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 National Level

Since the Scrutiny Review in 2004, the role of Parish/Town Councils has gained higher profile at a national level, largely due to the “Empowerment” agenda.

Broadly speaking, the Empowerment agenda aims to reinvigorate local democracy and devolve more power to the local level.

- 3.1.1 The *Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007* provides a number of new powers to town and parish councils, the most significant of which is the power of wellbeing.

The power of wellbeing will provide town and parish councils with a general power to spend on any activity which adds to the economic, social or environmental well-being of its community. Previously they could only act where they had specific legislative power to do so.

There will be new criteria which each parish council will have to meet if they wish to exercise the power. The detail of these criteria is still awaited but they are likely to be based on the Quality Parish Status criteria.

- 3.1.2 The Quality Parish Scheme which was launched in 2003 was revised in June 2008 to better reflect the increasing professionalism of Parish/Town Councils. The aim of the Scheme is to provide benchmark minimum standards for Parish/Town Councils.

#### 3.2 Local Level

In Rotherham we have 29 Parish/Town Councils – although three of these are “Parish meetings”. They are:

- |                    |                           |                   |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| • Anston           | • Aston cum Aughton       | • Bramley         |
| • Brampton Bierlow | • Brinsworth              | • Catcliffe       |
| • Dalton           | • Dinnington St Johns     | • Firbeck         |
| • Gildingwells*    | • Harthill with Woodall   | • Hooton Levitt * |
| • Hooton Roberts * | • Laughton en le Morthern | • Letwell         |
| • Maltby           | • Orgreave                | • Ravenfield      |
| • Thorpe Salvin    | • Thrybergh               | • Thurcroft       |
| • Todwick          | • Treeton                 | • Ulley           |
| • Wales            | • Wentworth               | • Whiston         |
| • Wickersley       | • Woodsetts               |                   |

\* Parish meetings

- 3.2.1 84.76% of the land in the Rotherham borough is covered by a civil parish and around half of the population live in a parished area.

- 3.2.2 As part of the Community Strategy, there is a commitment to promote active

citizenship and democracy and ensure that “there will be many opportunities for people to be involved in civic life and local decision making.” Parish Councils, as the first tier of local government, have an essential role to play in this aspiration.

### **4 BACKGROUND**

4.1 The 2004 Scrutiny Review made 13 recommendations which are listed in the table at Appendix 1. These recommendations were accepted by the Cabinet. Since then most of the recommendations have been actioned, including the main one which was to develop a Charter between RMBC and Parish/Town Councils to promote joint working. This was the first Charter of its kind in South Yorkshire.

4.2 Of the 13 recommendations, work is outstanding on the following points:

- Training and development opportunities for officers of Rotherham MBC should, where relevant, be opened up to parish clerks.
- Other forms of support for Parish councils by Rotherham MBC should be explored – eg Legal advice, Human resources advice
- Rotherham MBC should develop a comprehensive guide to funding opportunities for parish councils. As parish councils may not be aware of the specific requirements of the different types of funding streams, the External Funding Officer could play a greater role in ‘coaching’ parish councils through the application process to try and ensure that their bids are successful.
- Parish Councils should have access to the Council’s Intranet including the up to date staffing lists and structures

4.3 Some of these issues were raised again during the consultation which formed the basis of this Review and have therefore been included in the recommendations for action.

### **5 FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 Questionnaires to Parish Councils**

An updated questionnaire - based on the one used as part of the 2004 Review - was sent to all Parish Councils in August 2008 to ask about their experiences of working with RMBC. Of the 29 Parish and Town Councils in the borough, 15 responded giving just over a 50% response rate.

5.1.1 Overall the responses were positive with a general impression that improvements have been made but that there is still more work to be done. A full summary of the responses along with the questions asked is attached at [Appendix 2](#).

5.1.2 Around 2/3 of respondents reported that working relationships with RMBC have improved in the last 2 years. The main improvements noted were better communications and an increased willingness on the part of RMBC

officers to engage with parish councils. The increased use of email was welcomed and it was felt that this could be improved still further.

- 5.1.3 With regards to help and support from RMBC this was generally perceived to be adequate and to have either improved or stayed the same in the last 2 years. The majority (57%) of the respondents felt that opportunities for partnership working are the same as two years ago, and one Council commented that although the Joint Charter has set the scene for partnership working, this has not materialised.
- 5.1.4 The Parish Network meetings and Planning meetings are considered by most to be useful and it is generally felt that RMBC consults sufficiently on matters of interest to parish councils.

### **5.2 Interviews with Parish Councils**

In order to discuss some of the issues raised in the questionnaires in more depth, three Parish/Town Councils were invited to send representatives to a meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. In selecting the three Councils to interview, close attention was paid to the questionnaire responses with the aim of having a good cross-section of opinions.

- 5.2.1 Two of the three invited Councils attended: Anston and Dinnington St Johns. Two members of the review group and an officer from the Scrutiny team met with the representatives of the two councils to discuss their experiences of working with RMBC and to hear suggestions for how improvements could be made to the working relationships.
- 5.2.2 Many issues were discussed with the Councillors and Clerks and some suggestions were made for improvements to the working relationship between their Councils and RMBC.

There was a discussion about the increased use of email for communication with Parish/Town Councils which was seen as a positive step. However it is felt that this could be improved still further. There have been some problems with emails getting blocked due to large file sizes but this has recently been addressed.

The question was asked whether Parish/Town councils are aware of the support that is available from RMBC? It was suggested that a checklist of the services available from each RMBC directorate could be compiled for use by Parish/Town Councils.

Some Councils are still waiting for support in setting up their websites and would like to know a timescale of when this can happen.

With regards to training, the issue was raised of the need to find a new Parish/Town Council representative for the Elected Member Learning and Development Panel.

During a discussion on Partnership working, concern was expressed that Parish/Town Councils are not always aware of how funding allocations across the borough take place. An example was given of the recent Play Pathfinder money where Parish/Town Councillors were unclear as to how the funding had been allocated. Councils would like to be kept informed of

decisions that are being made regarding funding for work in their parishes, and the rationale for the decisions that are reached.

A question was raised regarding the South Yorkshire Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks and whether it could be revitalized with the aim of providing a forum for clerks to share information and ideas. If there is interest among the clerks in Rotherham, RMBC might consider how to support this initiative, for example by hosting an introductory meeting.

### **5.3 Questionnaires to RMBC Officers**

A questionnaire was sent out to all RMBC Strategic Directors for distribution to officers who work with Parish Councils. 29 questionnaires were completed by officers and gave a good insight into their experiences.

- 5.3.1 A full summary of the responses and the questions asked is included at Appendix 3.
- 5.3.2 Again the responses from officers were generally positive; 82% of respondents reported that they found it easy to get the information they needed from Parish Councils. 52% felt that communications had improved, 40% felt they had stayed the same and 8% felt they had got worse.
- 5.3.3 36% of officers felt that there is an overlap of workload between Parish Councils and Area Assemblies (compared to 73% of Parish Councils); examples given of overlap included consultation processes and providing duplicate information to representatives of different groups. All of the Parish Councils that responded have representatives that attend Area Assembly meetings.

### **5.4 Interviews with RMBC Officers**

Interviews were also held with four RMBC Officers to allow more detailed discussion on some of the issues arising from the questionnaires.

Two of the four officers interviewed were unaware of the Parish Councils Joint Working Charter.

There was discussion about the lack of understanding in some Parish/Town councils about how RMBC processes and services work. It was suggested that an information pack could be put together for all Parish Clerks about how the Council works. This could then be sent out to new Clerks as part of their induction.

It was felt that the Rother Valley South Parish Network provided a very useful forum for the 11 Parish councils to find common ground and discuss issues of mutual interest. There is a sentiment amongst some of the Parish Councillors that RMBC is taking over the RVS Network because the agenda is compiled by the Area Partnership Manager. It was felt that this is not in keeping with the Empowerment agenda which aims to give more power to Parish/Town councils. In light of this, it was suggested that Parish councils could be asked to take responsibility for compiling the agenda for one of the Parish Network meetings.

There was agreement that the main area for improvement seems to be communication between RMBC and the Parish/Town Councils. A suggestion was made that more information could be included on the Parish/Town Council website. One example put forward was a page of Frequently Asked Questions and an option for Parish/Town Councils to post a question to RMBC officers via the website.

## **6 EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

### **6.1 Learning from other Authorities**

The working group felt that although there is always scope for improvement and learning, the situation in Rotherham between the Borough Council and Parish/Town Councils is currently relatively successful in comparison with other areas of the country. Therefore due to the limited time available it was agreed to focus this Review on the situation locally. Opportunities to learn from exemplary practice and success stories from other areas may arise in the future and these could be fed into the Joint Working Group for consideration.

### **6.2 Good practice in Rotherham**

Following the Scrutiny Review in 2004, much work has been done to improve the working relationships between RMBC and Parish and Town Councils. Some of the key achievements are detailed below.

### **6.3 Joint Working Charter**

One of the recommendations of the 2004 Scrutiny Review was that a Charter be drawn up between RMBC and the Parish and Town Councils which would promote a partnership approach to future working.

6.3.1 During March 2006, 24 of Rotherham's 29 Parish and Town Councils signed up to a Charter of joint working arrangements – the first in South Yorkshire.

6.3.2 It was agreed that the Charter would be a 'living' document, updated regularly to reflect changing circumstances and the development of stronger ties between the two tiers of local government and since 2006 has been revised by the Joint Working Group.

### **6.4 Quality Parish Status**

The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme was launched in 2003 following the Government's *Rural White Paper*, 2000. Three Parish councils in Rotherham have achieved the Quality Status under this scheme: Whiston, Anston and Aston-cum-Aughton.

6.4.1 In order to qualify for the Quality Status, Councils must demonstrate that they have reached the standard required by passing several tests. This is a fairly lengthy process and requires a significant amount of time and resource which some Councils are not able to commit to.

6.4.2 The RMBC and Parish and Town Councils Joint Working Group is taking action to promote the Quality Status to all Parish and Town Councils in the

borough by organising workshops, briefings and support sessions.

- 6.4.3 One of the benefits of obtaining the Quality Status is that it allows Parish and Town Councils to take on additional duties if they so wish. There have been some informal enquiries from one of the Quality Status Councils about taking on footpath maintenance as a “first step” however to date this has not been progressed.

## **6.5 Joint Working Group**

A Joint Working Group was formed in December 2005, initially to oversee the writing and development of the Joint Working Charter. The role is now to encourage joint working and co-operation between RMBC and Parish/Town Councils through the framework of the agreed Charter.

- 6.5.1 The group consists of 5 elected representatives of Parish and Town Councils and relevant Rotherham Council officers, and is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement. Meetings are held every six weeks and minutes are sent to all the Parish/Town Councils.
- 6.5.2 The Annual Report 2006-7 of the Joint Working Group documents some of the work undertaken which includes: setting up Parish/Town Council websites; promoting the Quality Status; contribution to scrutiny reviews; revising the Joint Working Charter and launching the Parish Network.
- 6.5.3 The Joint Working Group was successful with a Budget Issues Paper (BIP) submitted to RMBC for the 2008/9 financial year for a dedicated budget which helped to raise the profile of Parish/Town councils.
- 6.5.4 A representative from the Joint Working Group now sits on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Proud Theme board which meets every two months to discuss issues relating to the Proud theme of the Community Strategy.
- 6.5.5 Despite the positive achievements, there is a feeling that the Joint Working Group has to date been very much led by RMBC officers whereas the aim was for it to be driven by the Parish/Town Councils.

## **6.6 Parish Network**

The Parish Network was set up in 2007 to provide an opportunity for all Parish and Town Councils in the borough to meet to discuss issues of mutual interest with RMBC. The meetings take place 3 or 4 times a year, and agendas are published on the Rotherham Parish Councils network: [www.rotherhamparishcouncils.gov.uk](http://www.rotherhamparishcouncils.gov.uk)

- 6.6.1 The questionnaire results showed that most, but not all, Parish/Town Councils find the Parish Network meetings useful. There has been good turnout for the meetings with on average 30-50 attendees and feedback has been very positive.
- 6.6.2 Of the RMBC officers who responded to the questionnaires, less than half (48%) are aware of the Parish Network Meetings. However anecdotal

evidence suggests that there is growing recognition amongst officers that the Network provides an excellent forum for consulting with Parish/Town councils.

- 6.6.3 The Network has introduced Good Practice Awards which are presented at the Meetings to Parish/Town Councils who have shown excellent practice in a certain area. Examples include an award to Anston Parish Council to mark its achievement of Quality status and to Catcliffe Parish Council in recognition of its Community Leadership role during the floods of 2007 and aftermath. It is hoped that this will not only recognise and celebrate good practice but also inspire other Parish/Town Councils to improve their services and practices.
- 6.6.4 As with the Joint Working Group, it is felt that the Network is currently led by RMBC officers rather than by Parish/Town Councils.

## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following the responses on the questionnaires and the discussions held in the interviews, the Review Group makes the following recommendations:

### **7.1 Communications**

- 7.1.1 A checklist is compiled of the services available to Parish/Town Councils from each RMBC directorate. This should be circulated to all Clerks and made available on the Rotherham Parish & Town Councils website.
- 7.1.2 An induction pack containing information on RMBC services and contacts is prepared for all parish clerks in the Borough.
- 7.1.3 A calendar of meetings of all parish councils is prepared annually and distributed across the council in order that RMBC officers consulting with Parish Councils do so in a timely fashion
- 7.1.4 The Rotherham Parish & Town Councils website develops a member only section and includes: a list of Frequently Asked Questions; a clerk/member chat room; RMBC key officer contact details; the Joint Working Group Annual Work plan.
- 7.1.5 Contact is made with Parish/Town Councils to establish which ones are waiting for support to set up a website and to give them a timescale of when this can happen.
- 7.1.6 In order to further improve relations and identify specific issues, a meeting is held with each Parish/Town Council to discuss what RMBC is doing to promote engagement with Parish/Town Councils and to encourage a closer working relationship.

### **7.2 Training**

- 7.2.1 A Parish/Town Councils representative is elected to sit on the Member Learning and Development Panel.



7.2.2 RMBC officer Training is made available for Parish/Town Council clerks where appropriate, and advertised to Parish/Town Councils with plenty of notice given.

7.2.3 That Induction for RMBC officers should include a section on the role of Parish/Town Councils and their relationship with RMBC – where appropriate.

### **7.3 Empowerment**

7.3.1 Further development work is undertaken with Parish Councils so as to allow for the Parish Network and, where appropriate, Area Assembly Parish network meetings to become more Parish/Town Council led.

7.3.2 Investigations are made to gauge the level of interest amongst Parish/Town Council clerks to develop a South Yorkshire wide network. Appropriate support is provided if required, for example by hosting an initial meeting.

## **8 THANKS**

### **8.1 RMBC Officers**

- Paul Griffiths Community Liaison Officer
- Richard Jackson Streetpride Area Manager (Wentworth)
- Sarah Curren Area Partnership Manager, Rother Valley South
- Joanne Edley Tourism Manager

### **8.2 Representatives from Parish and Town Councils**

- Cllr Ian St.John Anston Parish Councillor
- Michael Gazur Clerk to Anston Parish Council
- Cllr Pauline Davies Chair of Dinnington St. John's Town Council
- Alan Shaw Town Council Clerk and Finance Officer, Dinnington St. John's Town Council

## **9 APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1****Summary of Recommendations from the 2004 Scrutiny Review “Working with Parish Councils”**

	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>ACTION TAKEN</b>	<b>COMPLETE?</b>
1	Lack of clarity as to which cabinet member has responsibility for Parish council liaison. Make a clear recommendation for a Parish Councils’ “Champion” in the cabinet.	The Cabinet Member for Communities & Involvement has responsibility for Parish Councils in their portfolio. This is currently Cllr Mahroof Hussain.	YES
2	In the meantime the Executive Member with responsibility for Community Planning & Social Inclusion should take forward the proposals for Working with Parish Councils.	This was undertaken by the then Cabinet member, Cllr Glyn Robinson	YES
3	A part-time Parishes Development Officer should be appointed with a specific “task and finish” brief.	This post was not appointed to directly however from 2006 the work to develop relationship with parish councils has been undertaken by Paul Griffiths as part of a wider role and this is likely to continue.	YES
4	Ask the Town and Parish Councils of Rotherham to form an association so as to be able to work through the recommendations made by this review group in a corporate way.	This has not happened formally though they do meet and also elections have taken place to elect their representatives.	YES
5	Draw up a Charter between the parish councils and Rotherham MBC. To be in place by the end of March 2005.	This was in place by March 2006	YES
6	To start negotiating a Charter, hold a 1-day seminar/ conference in October 2004 with all of Rotherham’s Town and Parish Councils to work through the issues of working together.	This took place in January 2005	YES

7	There should be a Link officer in each service area with whom Parish councils could liaise.	These are detailed in the Charter document	YES
8	Training & development opportunities for members of Rotherham MBC should, where relevant, be opened up to parish councillors.	This takes place and there is also a Parish Councils representative on the Member Development & Training Panel.	YES
9	Training and development opportunities for officers of Rotherham MBC should, where relevant, be opened up to parish clerks.	This has not happened.	NO
10	Other forms of support for Parish councils by Rotherham MBC should be explored – eg Legal advice, Human resources advice	This has happened on an ad hoc basis	YES (although much more could be done)
11	Rotherham MBC should develop a comprehensive guide to funding opportunities for parish councils...the External Funding Officer could play a greater role in 'coaching' parish councils through the application process to try and ensure that their bids are successful.	This has happened only on an ad hoc basis.	NO
12	Improving Communication with parish councils: a) Annual meetings on a formal basis with all town and parish councils  b) Quarterly representative meetings – possibly area based topic meetings eg Planning, recycling, Streetpride held by the relevant services.  c) Meaningful consultation when developing council plans - issuing parish councils with a list of upcoming consultations and their deadlines so they can be allocated adequate time within their schedule of meetings.	a)There is an annual meeting with all Parish and Town Councils and Parish Meetings  b)There are quarterly meetings of the Steering Group There are meetings held with relevant service areas notably Planning  c)This is laid down in the Charter	YES  YES  YES

	<p>d) Access to the council's Intranet including the up to date staffing lists and structures</p> <p>e) A regular e-bulletin to all parish councils</p> <p>f) Support in developing parish council websites</p>	<p>d)There is no access to the Intranet</p> <p>e)There is a regular newsletter</p> <p>f) Help has been given to some Councils but others still waiting.</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p> <p>NO</p> <p><b>NO</b></p>
13	There should be a further review to look at how the council would work with Parish Councils which achieve Quality Parish Council status.	The 2008 Review will look at working with Quality Parish Councils.	YES

**APPENDIX 2**

**PARISH COUNCILS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT WORKING WITH RMBC**

**Responses received from:**

*15 Councils:*

*Anston, Aston-cum-Aughton, Bramley, Brampton Bierlow, Brinsworth, Catcliffe, Dalton, Dinnington St Johns, Gildingwells, Harthill with Woodall, Letwell, Thurcroft, Ulley, Whiston, Woodsetts*

**What services does your Parish Council provide?**

**On its own:**

- *Recreation, sports and play areas, theatre/dance hall, parks, allotments, garages, burial ground, parish hall*
- *Newsletter, grants to local organisations, public surgeries, youth council*
- *Grounds and verge maintenance, flowers, street/path cleaning, street cleaning, bins*
- *Local events, Christmas decorations.*

**In partnership with others:**

- *Community centre, Pavillion, Village Hall, leisure centre, recreation areas*
- *Footpaths, flowerbeds, lighting, burials, caretaking and cleaning of village hall, Planning, financial support to community organisations, newspaper*
- *Dancing, crèche, play group, scouts, Summer fairs and galas, micro library, detached youth work*

**WORKING WITH ROTHERHAM MBC**

**1 With which Borough services do you work/have contact?**

*Rother Valley West Assembly*

*Streetpride, Waste and Recycling, Grounds Maintenance*

*EDS, Planning, Rotherham Construction Partnership (RCP)*

*Area Assembly*

*Young Peoples Services, Play Development*

*Licensing*

*Environmental Health*

*Highways, Transport, Right of Way*

*Neighbourhoods, Paul Griffiths*

*Green spaces, Trees and Woodland*

*RBT*

*Burials, Cemeteries and Crematorium*

*Corporate Finance, Accounts, Benefits*

*Legal and Democratic Services, Committee Services, Elections, Member support*

*Leisure*

*Valuation*

**2 How useful is the contact you have with each service?**

A variety of responses were received. Where answers highlighted specific problems, these have been included in the list at Appendix 4.

**3 Would you say that the working relationship with RMBC has improved in the last 2 years?**

Yes	No
9	5

**INFORMATION FLOW**

**1 When contacting the Borough Council do you find it easy to get the information you need?**

Lowest	1	2	3	4	5	Highest
	1	1	3	8	1	

**2 Would you say that contact with RMBC has improved in the last 2 years?**

Yes	No	No Change
8	1	5

**3 In general, do you find the level of support and help you get from the Borough is adequate?**

Lowest	1	2	3	4	5	Highest
	1	1	3	9		

**4 Would you say that support and help from RMBC has improved in the last 2 years?**

Yes	No	No Change
8	1	5

**5 Do you find that the flow of information from the Borough Council to your Parish Council is adequate and efficient?**

Lowest	1	2	3	4	5	Highest
	1		5	8		

**6 Would you say that the flow of information from RMBC has improved in the last 2 years?**

Yes	No	No Change
6	1	6

**CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT**

- 1 How useful do you find the Parish Network meetings between the Borough and the Parish Councils?

Lowest	1	2	3	4	5	Highest
	1	3	2	5	2	

- 2 How useful do you find the Planning meetings between the Borough and the Parish Councils?

Lowest	1	2	3	4	5	Highest
	1	2	5	4	2	

- 3 Do you feel that the Borough Council consults your Parish Council on issues of interest to your residents?

Lowest	1	2	3	4	5	Highest
	2		6	7		

- 4 Do you feel that there is any overlap of workload between Parish Councils and the Area Assemblies?

Yes	No
9	4

- 5 Do representatives from your Parish Council attend Area Assembly Meetings?

Yes	No
13	1

- 6 Are representatives from Parish Councils in your area members of the Area Assembly Co-ordinating Group?

Yes	No
9	5

- 7 Do you feel the opportunities for partnership working have increased in the last 2 years?

Yes	No	No Change
4	2	8

**ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD WISH TO MAKE**

The Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel would welcome any comments concerning your relationship with Parish Councils. In particular we would be interested in any changes you feel have occurred (or not occurred) since the launch of the Joint Working Charter in April 2006.

- *Overall we are very happy with our direct relationship with RMBC and welcome the Charter and the initiatives put in place to improve communication and partnership working. The Parish Council feels that it has also extensively promoted improved links with RMBC to mutual benefit. It is also considered that the Area Assembly has improved significantly although there are strong reservations about the usefulness / effectiveness of the RVS Parishes meeting since it seems to have been formalised. This is seen as an unnecessary additional tier. While there is much overall improvement, some services still do not communicate well and we will continue to make representations about this as and when necessary.*
- *“Area Assemblies and Parish Networks don’t link up.”*
- *Welcome the involvement of Parish Councils in Scrutiny Panels, the inclusion of Parish Councils in the Services for Rotherham Stand at Rotherham Show, the opening up of Borough Councillor Training Sessions to Parish Councillors and the introduction of limited consultation on Licensing Applications.*
- *Still occasions where the Parish Council's position is not fully appreciated by some officers and seems to be considered in the same way as other local community organisations.*
- *We sense an improvement in the council's relationship, but more still needs to be done.*



**APPENDIX 3**

**DIRECTORATE RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT WORKING WITH PARISH COUNCILS**

A total of 29 questionnaires were completed which can be broken down b directorate as follows:

<i>EDS</i>	<i>7 questionnaires</i>
<i>EDS Streetpride</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>EDS Culture and Leisure</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>N&amp;AS</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Chief Executives</i>	<i>3</i>

**WORKING WITH PARISH COUNCILS**

**Please outline the contact that you have with Parish Councils (including provision of services, requests for information etc):**

A wide range of services were listed including Libraries, Development projects, Consultation, Delivering sports activity, Presentations to Parish meetings, Standards issues, Parish Boundary Review, Tourism, Rights of way.

**2 With which Parish Councils do you work/have contact (in order of frequency)?**

*Dalton, Aston, Brinsworth, Wickersley, Treeton  
Brampton, Dinnington, Anston, Whiston, Maltby, Wales, Harthill with Woodall  
Catcliffe, Todwick, Orgreave, Thrybergh, Wentworth, Thurcroft, Ulley, Ravenfield  
Laughton-en-le-Morthern, Woodsetts  
Ravenfield, Firbeck, Gildingwells, Letwell, Thorpe Salvin, Bramley*

**3 Would you say that working relationships with Parish Councils have improved in the last 2 years?**

Yes	No
<b>14</b>	<b>12</b> of which <b>3</b> said always been good <b>3</b> said less than 2 yrs contact)

**INFORMATION FLOW**

**1 When contacting Parish Councils do you find it easy to get the information you need?**

Yes	No	Never contacted
<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

- 2 Would you say that communications with Parish Councils have improved in the last 2 years?

Yes	No	No Change
13	2	10

- 3 Do you find that the flow of information from the Parish Councils to RMBC is adequate and efficient?

Lowest	1	2	3	4	5	Highest
	2	6	12	5	3	

- 4 Would you say that the flow of information from Parish Councils has improved in the last 2 years?

Yes	No	No Change
5	2	17

## CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

- 1 Are you aware of the Parish Network meetings between the Borough and the Parish Councils?

Yes	No
14	15

- 2 Are you aware of the Planning meetings between the Borough and the Parish Councils?

Yes	No
10	19

- 3 How often do you consult Parish Councils on issues of interest to their residents?

Lowest	1	2	3	4	5	Highest
	6	3	1	8	7	

- 4 Do you feel that there is any overlap of workload between Parish Councils and the Area Assemblies?

Yes	No
8	14

- 5 Do you feel the opportunities for partnership working with Parish Councils have increased in the last 2 years?

Yes	No	No Change
12	3	11

**ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD WISH TO MAKE**

**The Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel would welcome any comments concerning your relationship with Parish Councils. In particular we would be interested in any changes you feel have occurred (or not occurred) since the launch of the Joint Working Charter in April 2006.**

- *Very good working relationship with Dinnington St Johns, regular meetings with the clerk and the 'land steering group', all meetings amenable and in spirit of co-operation (surveyor, EDS)*
- *The Visitor Economy Plan is being compiled and when the draft document is completed, it will go out to PCs for consultation.*
- *Archives and Local Studies Service – plans to build improved links with depositors over the next 5 years and this will include parish councils.*

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
--

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL SCRUTINY PANEL</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2008</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>DEBT RECOVERY SCRUTINY REVIEW</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVES</b>

## **5. Summary**

The Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel is concluding its first review and is committed to undertaking a second one. This paper contains the details of a suggested review on debt recovery, particularly the issues of bailiffs in Rotherham, and if approved by Members the recommendation a review group is set up. There is a suggested list of areas the Scrutiny Review could examine which Members are invited to add to.

## **6. Recommendations**

**The Scrutiny Panel decide if they would wish to undertake this Scrutiny Review.**

**The Panel nominates 4-5 Members to sit on the Review Group and anyone they wish to co-opt.**

**The Panel suggests any further areas the Review could examine or relevant officers to speak to**

## 7. Proposals and Details

This panel first undertook a Scrutiny Review of Debt Recovery chaired by Cllr Paul Lakin in October 2002. It made a number of recommendations based around improving the Council's corporate debt recovery process and particularly highlighted conduct issues around the boroughs private bailiff service. With the current financial climate remaining very uncertain it would be timely for this panel to revisit this review and examine what the impact of the credit crunch has actually meant for individual residents within Rotherham.

The Scrutiny Review could:-

- Revisit the recommendations from the original review for progress
- Identify and document the practices of bailiffs in Rotherham and the affects this has on the population.
- Examine how is the Council supporting those in financial difficulty and distinguishing between those who can't pay back debt and those that won't.
- Concentrate on any anecdotal evidence, particularly from Member surgeries and any Members willing to come forward with evidence.
- Assess how does the Council recovers its own debt and if there is now a joined up corporate approach to this.

The review could undertake research by:

- Consulting with the Director of Finance and Finance team to keep in touch with Council developments on credit crunch issues.
- Interviewing the new financial inclusion team at VAR and consider co-opting a member onto the Review Group to join up this work.
- Undertaking a Member survey to identify if this has been a recurrent surgery issue and what support Members have to cope with the situation.
- Examining the recent Advice Sector Scrutiny Review for relevant information. Following this, interview relevant advice/advocacy organisations in Rotherham.
- Examining what support there is in the Borough for anyone in a position of multiple debt.
- Examining what monitoring processes there are for debt recovery.
- Interview relevant local creditors and any bailiff services the Council works with.
- Interviewing appropriate Council Officers
- Examining the legal advice and information available to debtors from the Council
- Examining if the Council has a debt collection policy and to what extent is it working.
- Looking at good practice elsewhere
- Taking note of any relevant national legislation.

## **8. Finance**

There should be no financial repercussions and any finance required for this review should be met within the Scrutiny budget.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

It is a risk that in such an uncertain financial period the Scrutiny Panel does not assess what this could mean for individuals in Rotherham. It is also a risk that the panel is committed to two Scrutiny Reviews a year so there is the requirement we undertake one more.

## **10. Background Papers and Consultation**

Scrutiny Review of Debt Recovery 2002

Advice Sector Scrutiny Review 2008

National Standards for Enforcement Agents- May 2002

**Contact Name** : *Angela Power, Scrutiny Adviser, 01709 822790*  
*angela.power@rotherham.gov.uk*

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> December, 2008</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Chesterhill Intensive Neighbourhood Management Pilot – ‘Moving Towards Sustainability’</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods and Adult Services</b>

**5. Summary**

Chesterhill Avenue was identified in 2007 as the most vulnerable community in Rotherham and in need of intensive neighbourhood management arrangements. A pilot neighbourhood was established covering around 650 households and a twelve month period of intensive management began in September 2007. This report outlines the progress and impact made by the pilot and details how the learning from the pilot will be shared across the borough.

**6. Recommendations**

**Members note the progress and impact of the pilot and consider how they can translate the learning from the pilot into action in their ward.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### 7.1 Background

In Rotherham's first Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment in March 2007, the Safer Rotherham Partnership employed the Vulnerable Localities Index (VLI) as a method of prioritising neighbourhoods. At five times the average for the borough, Chesterhill Avenue in Thrybergh was identified as the most vulnerable community in Rotherham and in need of immediate action.

As a direct response a high level partnership strategic group was established in summer 2007 to steer the development of the intensive neighbourhood management pilot and identify a pre-defined pilot boundary (650 households in total). By September 2007, a Neighbourhood Initiatives Manager was appointed through mainstream RMBC funding and the twelve month intensive neighbourhood management pilot began. The pilot has worked **with** the community in collaboration with local service providers and local ward members to make **their** neighbourhood a better place to live. The pilot has focused on:

- Stabilising crime and ensuring community safety.
- Increasing community involvement, trust and communication.

#### *7.1.1 Housing Market Renewal*

In September 2007 Housing Market Renewal activity began in the area with Chesterhill Avenue earmarked for redevelopment. A total of 143 unsustainable properties are due to be demolished. To date around 90% of all tenants have been re-housed and dispersed across the borough. Various mechanisms have been put in place to ensure individuals and families at risk receive the support they require and lettings are managed 'sensitively' taking into account the needs of the individual and the concerns of local partners. Demolition has already begun and will continue steadily over the coming months.

### 7.2 How it was done

The success was underpinned by a clear vision and a clear 12 month delivery plan which was shared with local partners to ensure they fully understood their role and how they could impact and contribute to the success of the pilot. Local residents were central to the delivery of the approach. The pilot has been intensive and incorporates some key elements to its success:

- Creating a **clear vision** for the pilot which partners and the local community could identify with – 'Neighbourhood Pride'.
- Having a **visible neighbourhood base** co-located in a young peoples centre.
- Assessing community need and priorities to focus on key priorities.



- Local Accountability, Co-ordination and leadership ensuring things 'get done'.
- **Strong Community Leadership** with local ward members taking a key and prominent frontline role.
- **Establishing local partnership governance structures** to enable partner agencies to 'work together' and deliver services more effectively.
- **Delivering 'quick win' interventions** to stabilise issues including mainstream service improvements.
- **Establishing mechanisms** for the local community to get involved and empowering a group of individuals to form a fully constituted residents group to enable them to work with partner agencies to make their neighbourhood a better place to live.
- **Bending and re-prioritising** mainstream service delivery.
- **Challenging and making changes to the 'way things are done'** which have included changes in procedures and behavioural change amongst officers.

### 7.3 Impact

In twelve months, change on stabilising the neighbourhood and mobilising the community is clearly evident and demonstrates what can be achieved through improved partnership working at a neighbourhood level.

Crime and anti-social behaviour have reduced significantly:

- Overall crime has **reduced by 33%**
- Anti-social behaviour has **reduced by 54%**
- Arson (typically secondary fires such as wheelie bins, rubbish etc) have reduced significantly in the area. The fire service report that on average in the area they would respond to around 3 or 4 of these a week, it's now more like 3 per month.

In addition, there has been a positive increase in resident perceptions on issues such as anti-social behaviour, community involvement and resident's perceived ability to influence decision making locally. The image of the neighbourhood has also improved, not just amongst residents but also partner agencies. Pride, trust and confidence amongst residents has also been boosted and there is a real feeling of change in the neighbourhood.

### 7.4 The Exit Strategy & Forward Plan

**The exit strategy** is essential to ensuring that the achievements and structures which have been tried and tested over the past 12 months are embedded into mainstream neighbourhood delivery. The exit strategy incorporates embedding the following:

- Structure & Local Governance arrangements
- Continuing what works

The forward plan outlines priorities for action for key stakeholders involved in the Chesterhill pilot ensuring **short term** and **longer term** issues requiring additional attention and development are addressed. The long term forward plan identifies longer term priorities which have emerged through community consultation aligned to the community strategy themes and contains targeted and focused interventions to address the complex and deep seated problems related to social exclusion and deprivation. These longer term issues will be addressed through the Wentworth South Area Assembly Community Plan.

### 7.5 Learning, Sharing & Roll Out

A full report *‘Moving towards sustainability: Impact, learning and forward plan’* has now been completed and the evidence from the pilot suggests that intensive neighbourhood management can make a difference to people’s quality of a life at a targeted neighbourhood level as well as adding value and contributing to borough wide priorities through increased perception measures and reductions around crime and ASB. In terms of next steps there are 3 main areas of work to be implemented over the coming months:

**‘Sharing and Learning’** - There is considerable learning which can be mainstreamed and delivered in other vulnerable neighbourhoods across the borough and a programme is currently being developed for area based teams across the borough.

**Developing a Partnership Framework** - Although there is a vast amount of learning from the pilot which can be rolled out and mainstreamed into ‘normal’ service delivery, consideration should also be given to rolling out the Intensive neighbourhood management approach into other neighbourhoods of high vulnerability in order to stabilise levels of crime/ASB and increase community involvement, pride and respect. A Partnership Framework for Intensive Neighbourhood Management in Rotherham will be developed which considers:

- How and when a neighbourhood becomes eligible for ‘intensive neighbourhood management’ arrangements.
- How we ensure intensive neighbourhood management is supported by partners including how the approach could be funded.
- Governance arrangements and how intensive neighbourhood management should be delivered.

**Developing a longer term strategy for neighbourhood management** – A longer term view on how the council and its partners can apply the learning and looking forward, what more we could achieve by tailoring the way we work with local people and deliver our services at a local level in those neighbourhoods across the borough which experience complex and multi-faceted issues around deprivation, crime, poverty and social exclusion.

## 8. Finance

The total cost to deliver the pilot including mainstream bent resource, external funding and funding from HMR totals £152,500 with 50% of this cost met by utilising existing mainstream resources.

In terms of savings, (using data available from the Home Office to calculate the economic and social cost of crime) it can be evidenced using an average cost that the reduction in incidents of crime and ASB in the pilot area over the past 12 months equates to savings of £150,000. The savings made by reduced incidents of crime, arson and anti-social behaviour meet the total cost of the pilot. It should be noted that had the intensive pilot not been delivered, there is a very strong possibility that crime and levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the area could have continued to rise increasing costs and resources over a longer period.

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

The structures for 'joined up' working now exist within the pilot area and resident's capacity for involvement and empowerment have been developed. The exit strategy recognises and supports the need for these structures to continue to grow and the model embedded, fully supported and monitored through more of a 'lighter touch' approach within existing mainstream structures.

The success of the pilot demonstrates that services at a neighbourhood level can be delivered more cost effectively and efficiently. It is now imperative that the learning, sharing and roll out now begins to take place along with the development of a longer term strategy for other vulnerable neighbourhoods across the borough.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The pilot contributes on all the Community Strategy themes particularly the SAFE theme and PROUD theme. Tackling anti-social behaviour is a priority of the Safer Rotherham Partnership.

The pilot has an important part to play in the delivery of LAA outcomes including building respect in communities and empowering local people to have a greater choice and influence over decision-making

**Contact Name:** Catherine Dale, Neighbourhood Initiatives Manager  
Tel: 07825 863853  
Email: [catherine.dale@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:catherine.dale@rotherham.gov.uk)

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
--

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>DEMOCRATIC RENEWEL SCRUTINY PANEL</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> December 2008</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL TRANSITIONAL FUNDING PROGRAMME 2008-11</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVES</b>

### **5. Summary**

This report provides a detailed analysis of the Neighbourhood Renewal Transitional Funding (NRF T/F) Programme 2008-11 from the commissioning of the funds through to the approved Themed activity.

### **6. Recommendations**

That the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel:-

- 1) Note the report and presentation for information.
- 2) Agree to receive six monthly updates throughout the Programme lifetime.

## 7. Proposals and Details

The NRF Transitional Funding Commissioning Plan was written to assist with the distribution of the Funds. This plan outlines a commissioning process drawn from the framework and has been guided specifically by the checklist contained within it. It also draws on learning from previous commissioning processes; NRF 2006-08 and Children's Fund. It has also taken into account the findings from the evaluation and scrutiny review of the NRF Programme 2006-08. Finally it has been developed in consultation with the relevant funding bodies, in this case Yorkshire Forward and GOYH.

The aim is to provide the following:

- A streamlined light touch process
- Transparency regarding how the funds are allocated and how providers are identified.
- Development of projects which continue the impetus created by the NRF programmes and reduce the requirement for continued funding.
- Identification of delivery that will be the most efficient and manageable within the tight timeframe available.
- Evaluation of impact to be built into the process from the outset.

### Guiding Principles.

Partners identified some key principles that should guide the development and implementation of the individual programmes of activity. These key principles were identified to ensure that activity meets the overall aims of the plan:-

- **Impact:** Activity will address agreed priorities with a clear, logical link between the activity and impact on the priority outcomes. In particular there will be a demonstrable impact on agreed indicators (either from the 198 or locally defined ones). This will be evaluated from the outset.
- **Best Practice:** The proposals will build on activities within previous rounds of NRF, Objective 1, SRB and SRIP that have been shown to have had success and developed models of good practice. There will be no more funding for Rotherham under either of these streams therefore the emphasis will be on consolidating their legacy and ensuring that good practice is embedded in future service delivery.
- **Partnership:** The proposals will be developed and implemented in partnership via the Theme Board structures outlined. Lead Theme Boards would be expected to identify the involvement and role of partners.
- **Sustainability:** It is a fundamental requirement that activities supported will be sustainable in the longer term. See comments in Best Practice – pilot

activity and/or one-off “projects” will only be considered if the activity starts to address gaps in existing provision and has a very clear forward strategy.

- Value for Money and Efficiency:** As the Accountable Body for the transitional funding, Rotherham MBC has the responsibility to make final decisions regarding the allocation of the funds. It must therefore implement a programme management regime which ensures value for money and will also have a responsibility to audit expenditure within the programme. The Accountable Body Team within the Chief Executive’s Office will be responsible for ensuring that projects comply with all requirements and for managing the overall programme. The ERDF funding will be the subject of a contract with Environmental and Development Services within RMBC therefore the contract for Theme 1 will be managed through this route.
- Equity:** This is a targeted commissioning approach therefore it is inevitable that direct contracting with providers of projects will take place. It also important that all such decisions are open and accountable and that a clear rationale exists. Where there is any doubt tendering or bidding processes will be used and a fair distribution of resources will be crucial. Finally it is important that projects do no inadvertently create or re-inforce any inequalities. In order to assess this an equalities impact assessment will be incorporated into the process at both theme and project level.

**The Programme Themes**

The strategy for commissioning activity has been based on partners identification of 6 themes, drawn directly from the Community Strategy and LAA. In addition each of the 6 themes helps to deliver elements of specific strategies or plans within the Rotherham Partnership structure. The aim is to develop these into discrete programmes of activity to operate flexibly over the three year period. A summary of these can be found below.

<b>Theme 1: Employment, Enterprise and Financial Inclusion</b>	
<p><b>Community Strategy Priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote innovation, enterprising behaviour, competitiveness and sustainability</li> <li>Promote business start ups, growth and inward investment</li> <li>Maximise employment opportunities for all by supporting disadvantaged people into work</li> </ul>	<p><b>LAA Indicators:</b></p> <p><b>Existing LAA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of new start business located in RMBC owned business centres or registered with Business Link South Yorkshire</li> <li>Number of IB claimants into work for at least 16 hours per week for 13 consecutive weeks as measured by Rotherham Phoenix Centre</li> </ul>

		<b>New LAA</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall employment rate</li> <li>• Working age people on out of work benefits</li> <li>• VAT registration rate</li> </ul>	
<b>Proposed 3 year allocation:</b> £1.4m (TF) £8m ERDF (subject to YF bidding process)	<b>Lead Theme Board:</b> Achieving	<b>Supporting Theme Board:</b> Learning Work and Skills Board	<b>Key Strategies or Plans:</b> Working Neighbourhoods Plan Economic Masterplan ERDF Priority 3 Prospectus
<b>Theme 2: VCS Development</b>			
<b>Community Strategy Priorities:</b>		<b>LAA Indicators:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the means for citizens, the VCS and business to influence decision making (Proud)</li> <li>• Support a thriving, sustainable and diverse Voluntary and Community sector (Proud)</li> </ul>		<b>New LAA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality</li> <li>• Environment for a thriving third sector</li> </ul>	
<b>Proposed 3 year allocation:</b> £0.46m (TF)	<b>Lead Theme Board:</b> Proud	<b>Supporting Theme Board:</b>	<b>Key Strategies or Plans:</b> Voluntary Sector Strategy
<b>Theme 3: Area Based Budgets</b>			
<b>Community Strategy Priorities:</b>		<b>LAA Indicators:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the local environmental quality of our neighbourhoods (Safe)</li> <li>• Provide the means for citizens, the voluntary and community sector and businesses to influence decision making (Proud)</li> <li>• Build and support responsive and cohesive communities through neighbourhood management arrangements (Safe)</li> </ul>		<b>Existing LAA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of residents reporting via survey that various forms of anti-social behaviour are either a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem</li> <li>• Number of incidents of fly-tipping as recorded on Flycapture database</li> <li>• Number of incidents of graffiti as reported to RBT's CRM database</li> </ul> <b>New LAA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of principal roads where maintenance should be considered</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality</li> <li>• Perceptions of anti social behaviour</li> </ul>	
<b>Proposed 3 year allocation:</b> £0.10m (TF) development fund £0.36m (TF) Area Assemblies	<b>Lead Theme Board:</b> Safe	<b>Supporting Theme Board:</b> Proud	<b>Key Strategies or Plans:</b> Closing the Gap Area Based Plans
<b>Area Assembly Devolved Budget Amounts:-</b> The Area Based Activity Budget is spread across the 7 Area Assemblies with the monies allocated to each Area Partnership dependant on the number of residents and the length of highway in each of the areas.  The following amounts are awarded each year over the three year programme:-			
Rother Valley South		£20,025	
Rother Valley West		£17,097	
Wentworth Valley		£15,931	
Rotherham South		£17,125	
Rotherham North		£15,480	
Wentworth South		£17,285	
Wentworth North		£17,057	
Total per year		£120,000	
<b>Theme 4: Community Cohesion</b>			
<b>Community Strategy Priorities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and support responsive and cohesive communities through neighbourhood management arrangements (Safe)</li> <li>• Promote understanding, respect and belonging within Communities and the Borough (Proud)</li> </ul>		<b>LAA Indicators:</b> <b>Existing LAA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of residents reporting via survey that various forms of anti-social behaviour are either a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem</li> </ul> <b>New LAA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions of anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their area</li> </ul>	
<b>Proposed 3 year allocation:</b> £0.54m (ABG)	<b>Lead Theme Board:</b> Cohesive	<b>Supporting Theme Board:</b> Safe	<b>Key Strategies or Plans:</b> Community



£0.33 (Preventing Extremism)	Communities Partnership (Proud)		Cohesion Strategy
<b>Theme 5: Positive Opportunities for Young People</b>			
<b>Community Strategy Priorities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote understanding, respect and belonging within communities and the Borough (Proud)</li> <li>Create specific initiatives to maximise the engagement and participation in learning of people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods</li> </ul>		<b>LAA Indicator:</b> <b>New LAA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young People's participation in positive activities</li> <li>% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their area</li> </ul>	
<b>Proposed 3 year allocation:</b> £0.38m (TF)	<b>Lead Theme Board:</b> Proud	<b>Supporting Theme Board:</b> Alive Safe Proud CYP Board Learning	<b>Key Strategies or Plans:</b> CYP Plan
<b>Theme 6: Police Community Safety Officers</b>			
<b>Community Strategy Priorities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tackle and reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour (Safe)</li> <li>Reduce the fear and perception of crime (Safe)</li> </ul>		<b>LAA Indicators:</b> <b>Existing LAA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of residents reporting via survey that various forms of anti-social behaviour are either a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem</li> </ul> <b>New LAA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceptions of anti-social behaviour</li> <li>Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision</li> <li>Assault with injury crime rate</li> <li>First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17</li> </ul>	
<b>Proposed 3 year allocation:</b> £0.25 (TF)	<b>Lead Theme Board:</b> Safe	<b>Supporting Theme Board:</b> Safer Rotherham Partnership	<b>Key Strategies or Plans:</b> Community Safety Strategy

## 8. Finance

The funding streams which are directly linked within the Area Based Grant 2008-2011 are as follows:-

NRF Transitional Funding	£2,950,000
Community Cohesion	£540,000
Preventing Extremism	£361,000

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

Overall the risks and uncertainties have been addressed throughout the individual project appraisal panels as each project is asked to complete a full risk assessment and is then evaluated within the Appraisal Panels. The NRF T/F is programme managed through the Chief Executive's Office and this includes regular monitoring and reporting to ensure Projects are delivering to target for both expenditure and outcomes. The monitoring system also includes a risk assessment based audit of the programme which has been agreed via RMBC Internal Audit.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The NRF T/F Programme Themes within this paper have been developed by the Achieving, Proud and Safe Theme Boards as part of Rotherham's Community Strategy (CS). Each of the Projects which are contracted to deliver will therefore directly link to the appropriate element of the CS.

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

NRF 2006-08 Evaluation Report  
Rotherham Partnership Neighbourhood Renewal Transitional Funding  
Commissioning Plan 2008-11.  
Project Appraisal Forms

**Contact Name:** *Ian Squires*  
**Title:** *Regeneration Funding Manager*  
**Telephone extension:** *2793*  
**E-mail address:** *ian.squires@rotherham.gov.uk*

**DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL SCRUTINY PANEL**  
**Thursday, 23rd October, 2008**

Present:- Councillor Austen (in the Chair); Councillors Cutts, Dodson, J. Hamilton, Littleboy, Parker and Pickering.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Johnston and Mannion and Taiba Yasseen.

Also in attendance:- Councillor Alan Buckley (Parish Council Representative).

**121. COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman reported that Debbie Heath, co-optee, had now left Voluntary Action Rotherham and would no longer be a member of this Scrutiny Panel.

From the expressions of interest submitted previously, Joanna Jones from Giving Real Opportunities to Women, was still interested in joining this Scrutiny Panel.

Resolved:- That Joanna Jones be co-opted to the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel.

**122. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

**123. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**124. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT 2007/08, 2008/09 BUDGET**

Consideration was given to a report present by Matt Gladstone, Assistant Chief Executive, which provided information in respect of the 2007/08 outturn position plus the latest monitoring against the 2008/09 revenue budget as part of the first stage of the budget setting process for 2009/10.

Discussion ensued on the current overspends relating to:-

- Telephones.
- Transport.
- Credit Union.
- Legal Services – Use of Locums.
- Increasing workload of the Legal Department.

Reference was made to the budget underspend during 2007/08, the increased budget for 2008/09 with a predicted underspend and the confidence in the Chief Executive's Directorate to continue to deliver savings, especially through the work with partners to bring in external income.

Further information was to be provided on the Year Ahead Commitments for the Chief Executive's Directorate and the Service Plan.

The Scrutiny Panel noted the contribution by the Council to the Council newspaper and were informed that a partnership arrangement was now in existence. The £25,000 per edition would eventually be offset against the savings through advertising and recruitment, allowing the Newspaper to effectively run at no cost to the Council.

Further information was also provided on the transport fleet and the challenges being faced with the overtime costs for drivers.

The Scrutiny Panel would continue to receive reports on how the Chief Executive's Directorate was delivering priorities against the resources as part of the budget setting process.

Resolved:- (1) That the outturn position as at 31st March, 2008 and the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the period 1st April, 2008 to 31st August, 2008 be noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted to this Scrutiny Panel on the performance of the Chief Executive's Directorate in relation to its Year Ahead Commitments and Service Plan.

## **125. AREA PLANS FORMAT AND PROGRESS REPORTS 08/09**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Andrea Peers and Dianne Hurst, Area Partnership Managers, which provided an update on the format and progress of the Area Plans for 2008/09 including:-

- Documentation for the 08/09 Area Plans.
- Area Plan Booklet – Summary of what people told us, what we have been doing and what our plans were – Rotherham South example.
- Area Action Plan – Identifying community priorities and actions taken to address them – Rotherham South example.
- Setting the Scene Document – Overview of the work of Area Assemblies.
- Area Plan Progress Reports.

A review of the Area Plan documentation and process took place in early

2008 and looked in detail at the:-

- The format and look of the Area Plans – needed to be easy to read and relevant to other strategies and plans such as the Community Strategy, Communities in Control etc.
- Target audience – needed to meet different audience needs.
- Purpose of the documents – needed to be informative and up-to-date.

Following the review, recommendations were made to the Area Chairs meeting in June, 2008 that the Area Plan would comprise a suite of three documents each with a separate and specific purpose and forming the overall Area Plan for each area and to be used either individually or as a set of documents.

Examples of an Area Plan and an Area Assembly Action Plan 2008/09 for Rotherham South along with progress reports from each of the seven Area Assembly Areas for Quarter 1 (July, 2008) and Quarter 2 (October, 2008) listing progress against each of the actions in the 2008/09 Area Plans were submitted with the report.

A discussion and answer session ensued on the information attached to this report and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Simplified and published versions of the Area Plans and their availability to the general public.
- Area Action Plans and their expected outcomes.
- Baseline measurement of expected outcomes and incremental progress.
- Overview of Area Assemblies (Setting the Scene) – further information to be provided.
- Financial costs associated with producing the glossy leaflets and plans for each Area Assembly and the number of copies.
- Community priorities and engagement with local people.
- Delivery of the Area Plans and community priorities, project management and cycle of monitoring.
- Planning process and delivery.
- Updates to the Co-ordinating Group and Area Assembly.
- Effectiveness of Task and Finish Groups.
- Devolvement of budgets to Area Assemblies.
- Annual budget for the Area Assemblies and what this had been for the past few years.
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocations.
- Opportunity for participatory budget discussions.
- Inclusion of the leaflet “Know your Councillor” to be included in the document pack for each Area Assembly.
- Consultation on the 2009/10 Area Plans.

Resolved:- (1) That the progress on the Area Plans be noted and their content be supported.

(2) That further information be provided on the financial cost of producing glossy literature and documentation for the Area Assemblies, in addition to the annual budget allocation for this and previous years.

(3) That a further progress report be submitted on Quarter 3 for the Area Plans.

#### **126. UPDATE ON PLAIN ENGLISH**

Tracy Holmes, Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing, gave a short presentation on the use of Plain English in the Council.

The presentation drew specific attention to:-

- The Task that had been identified
- The current position.
- The Plain English Campaign and associated costs
- Support already available for Members and Staff.
- Work that could take place within existing resources to raise the profile of the issue
- The need to change behaviour, and the work that may require additional resources

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Report writing training and the need to return reports to officers if they are not easily understandable.
- Crystal Mark membership and the costs associated with cascade training – no real support expressed for this
- Performance management and compliance with plain English report writing.
- Competencies for managers and report writing training.
- The need to be more proactive with reports.

Resolved:- (1) That Tracy Holmes be thanked for her informative presentation.

(2) That the use of plain English be reported to the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee for them to champion and to consider the costs of the cascade training.

#### **127. REVIEW OF PARISH BOUNDARIES**

Further to Minute No. B164 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10th January, 2007, consideration was given to a report which set out the context, scope, arrangements and timescales for the review of parish boundaries.

The report also informed Members on the proposals submitted at Phase One of the review and the public consultation necessary at the next stage, before final recommendations on boundary changes could be made to the Council and the Electoral Commission.

Reference was also made to the indicative timeline for the Phase Two consultation process and the conclusion of the review and implementation of recommendations as part of Phase Three.

The Scrutiny Panel expressed its concern on the lack of any movement on this review on either contentious or non-contentious suggestions and asked whether this was due to staffing issues and was informed that there must be a period of consultation following any suggestion and this must be tested out with persons who may be interested. Consideration would then be given to any further representations made within the consultation period for commenting on the recommendations.

Discussions ensued on various aspects of the review and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Indicative timescales for the review completion.
- Treeton boundary to be in line with the River Rother.
- Communication blockages.
- Discussions with the Member Panel on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2008.
- Formation of a new parish in Hellaby and demolition of the current parish hall.
- Extraction of Hooper from the Brampton Bierlow Parish.
- Lack of communication/discussions with Parish Councils.
- Decision-making process.
- Communication with the Parish Network led by Neighbourhoods.
- Election process for new Parish Councils.
- Public meetings with the public and partner agencies in proposed new parish areas.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents and the proposals arising from the consultation at Phase One of the Parish Boundary Review be noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted on the outcomes of Phase Two consultation process and the final review recommendations in due course.

(3) That details of the timescales, consultation process and process for implementation be submitted to this Scrutiny Panel.

(4) That consideration be given to accelerating non-contentious issues.

**128. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2008**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Renewal

Scrutiny Panel held on 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2008 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

**129. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND INVOLVEMENT HELD ON 8TH SEPTEMBER, 2008**

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement held on 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2008.

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

**130. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 11TH JULY, 25TH JULY AND 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2008**

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July and 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2008.

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

**131. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL HELD ON 25TH SEPTEMBER, 2008**

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel held on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2008.

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

**132. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NEW ARRIVALS WORKING PARTY HELD ON 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2008**

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the New Arrivals Working Party held on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2008.

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

**133. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of this Scrutiny Panel take place on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2008 at the later time of 4.00 p.m.



**CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND INVOLVEMENT**  
**Monday, 24th November, 2008**

Present:- Councillor Hussain (in the Chair) and Councillor Burton.

**45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

**46. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13TH OCTOBER, 2008**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement held on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2008 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

**47. EASTWOOD AND SPRINGWELL UNITED - A NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE PILOT PROJECT**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Bob Holt, Neighbourhood Governance Development Worker, which gave an update on the progress made to date.

An interim evaluation report had been prepared to support the effective learning from this pilot project with an Executive Summary attached as an appendix to this report. The evaluation had been carried out early in the life of the forum, but already some key messages were emerging. There would also be a further evaluation of the project in March, 2009, which would contain final recommendations for partners and key lessons for the future of Eastwood and Springwell United.

The Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder had played an important role in supporting the development of Eastwood and Springwell United. Consideration was currently being given about how this support continued once the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder closed in March,, 2009.

The Executive Summary highlighted:-

- The broad based and inclusive neighbourhood forum in Eastwood and Springwell Gardens.
- The plans, based on open meetings four times a year supported by a planning group and potential working groups around particular topics.
- Support from the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder (NMP).

- The forum, now called Eastwood and Springwell United (ESU).
- A brief survey of residents views using questions based on national.
- Engagement with the community.
- Planned capacity building activities including training, networking and visits to other areas.
- Cohesion through Eastwood and Springwell United bringing people together across community and geographical boundaries.
- Developing a mechanism for all the voices of this neighbourhood to be heard.
- Sustainability of the forum.
- Transferring the outcomes of the consultation and research.
- Final recommendations following the evaluation of the Pilot Project.

It was noted that work was taking place with GROW in trying to address some issues that had arisen primarily around facilities at the new Rotherham Leisure Complex relating to all women sessions, same sex changing facilities, all frosted glass around the pool area and all male lifeguards.

Further information was provided on the developments of the forum, communication and relationship building in the community, engagement and the creation of voice opportunities,

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Traditional process of consulting the community.
- Engagement with the disabled and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender people.
- Flexibility of structures.
- Internal community with the Safer Neighbourhood Team.
- Introduction of incident monitoring.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of this report and the executive summary of the interim evaluation be noted.

(2) That liaison take place with the Community Cohesion Officer to share information particularly around community tensions.

(3) That the evaluation report of the project be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement's meeting in March, 2009.

**3E CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND INVOLVEMENT - 24/11/08**

**48. ROTHERHAM WOMEN'S STRATEGY PROGRESS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Zafar Saleem, Community Engagement and Cohesion Manager, which outlined the progress made in implementing actions within Rotherham Women's Strategy during the first six months of 2008-2009.

Good progress had been made overall in implementing the action plan and progress against the 48 objectives across all themes was summarised.

Limited updates have been received in relation to several actions under the Alive theme, but this should be rectified now a new lead from NHS Rotherham had been nominated by the Alive Board.

There had been a number of positive achievements, including examples of where the work of voluntary and community sector partners represented on Rotherham Women's Strategy Group were contributing towards the objectives in the Strategy.

There were two objectives which have been previously reported as red:-

- Achieving 7 - Action to develop a project proposal to work with businesses on the implementation of flexible working.

The Council were submitting a project proposal to Yorkshire Forward, this included an employer support project that would support the development of innovative HR packages including flexible working options - a decision is expected mid-January with delivery potentially from April 2009.

- Proud 9 - Action to promote and sustain Rotherham Women's Network.

GROW was still continuing to explore funding options to sustain the network from March, 2009.

Discussion ensued on the appropriate mechanism for sustainable funding for GROW and the colour coding on the action plan showing progress.

Resolved:- (1) That the good progress made overall in implementing the Strategy be noted.

(2) That further information be sought from GROW regarding the avenues of funding support on offer to them.

**49. MIGRATION TRENDS**

Consideration was given to the New Communities and Migration Briefing circulated by Miles Crompton, Research Co-ordinator, which acted as a

central source of information on new black and minority ethnic communities and migration trends.

The briefing paper set out information relating to:-

- Migration in Context.
- Impact of Migration in Rotherham.
- Rotherham Partnership Action.
- National Insurance Registrations in Rotherham.
- Migrant Workers and Trends.
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees.
- Ethnic Group Estimates.
- Children and Young People – School Ethnicity Data.
- European Roma Communities.
- Local Contacts.

Further information was provided on the collection of ethnicity data in schools and the ethnic composition in primary and secondary education.

Discussion ensued on the diversity of children in Rotherham, the usefulness of data capture to avoid duplication and how this information could be shared across Directorates.

The wider circulation of the briefing note was also considered and it was suggested that this be discussed further with the Local Strategic Partnership.

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

(2) That officers from the Chief Executive's office and Neighbourhoods investigate the possibility of sharing statistical information.

(3) That the Local Strategic Partnership be asked to consider the circulation base of this briefing note.

#### **50. BRIEFING - 'CHAMPIONS OF PARTICIPATION'**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper presented by Zafar Saleem, Community Engagement and Cohesion Manager, which outlined the key issues from the Yorkshire and Humber Workshop – "Champions of Participation" held on 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2008.

Resolved:- That the contents of the briefing paper be noted.

#### **51. COMMUNITY COHESION UPDATE**

Gail Wilcock, Community Cohesion Officer, gave an update on activities since the new service was implemented.

Progress included:-

- Quarter 2 (July to September) statistics on racial incidents (BVPI 174 and 175) totalled 52, which come from Directorates and 2010. Of these 52, 36 were from schools. South Yorkshire Police figures were also now being received and incorporated and for October (excluding 2010) there had been 27 incidents, 17 of which were from the Police. Further information on previous reporting procedures of incidents would be sought and statistics compared.
- The database of recording incidents was still in the trial stage and had been subject to a few teething problems, which would be resolved shortly.
- The Steering Group monitoring incidents was now called "ACT" short for Action on Community Tension and would consider reports from the Community Intelligence Unit.
- The Service Level Agreement with "Stop Hate UK" commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2008 and all incidents of hate crime would be referred through for action by the appropriate body. None had been received to date.
- The publication media group meeting had met to look at the possibility of inserting a strap line into Rotherham News and whether to include information in future publications. This was being considered alongside the budget allocation.
- Publicity and promotion in general, including weekly briefings from the Police, the possibility of a sharing a reporting line with the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and Stop Hate UK information.
- Community tension monitoring template – this was to be trialled shortly and would be incorporated into a database.
- Plans for individual advisory groups in conjunction with 2010 and South Yorkshire Police in order to communicate with groups of people from ethnic minorities, disabled, L.G.B.T. and vulnerable areas.
- Licensed Taxi Improvement Plan and plans for partnership working in the future.
- Information sharing regarding incidents involving Elected Members.

Resolved:- (1) That the update and progress be noted.

(2) That liaison take place with relevant officers regarding the Licensed Taxi Improvement Plan.

**52. FORWARD PLAN/WORK PROGRAMME FOR COMMUNITIES AND INVOLVEMENT.**

Further issues/reports for consideration should be included on the Forward Plan and an updated version be included on the agenda for the next meeting, which should also include any reports from Neighbourhoods.

**53. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING - MONDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 2008 AT 1.00 P.M.**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Involvement take place on the revised date of Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2008, at 1.00 p.m.