

SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP
Wednesday, 26th January, 2011

Present:- Councillor Smith (in the Chair): The Mayor, Councillor McNeely:
 Councillor Pickering.

together with:-

Martin Aizlewood	RFT
Karl Battersby	Strategic Director, Environment and Development Services, RMBC
Bill Cooper	Green Spaces Development Manager, RMBC
Janet Johnson	Chief Executive, Groundwork Dearne Valley Projects, Customer Interface Officer, RMBC
Hugh Long	Property Environmental Manager, RMBC
David Rhodes	Sheffield City Council
David Wilde	Voluntary Action Rotherham
Nikky Wilson	

51. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor J. Austen	RMBC
Jo Abbott	NHS Rotherham
Carolyn Barber	Ecologist, RMBC
Andrew Denniff	Rotherham & Barnsley Chamber of Commerce
Alice Rodgers	Maltby Environment Forum

52. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER, 2010

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Sustainability Partnership held on 24th November, 2010 were received and the contents noted.

53. ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

54. SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP TERMS OF REFERENCE

David Rhodes reported that the Terms of Reference had last been reviewed in September, 2009, and referred to recent changes in membership and other changes which meant that these were now out of date.

It was therefore proposed, in conjunction with officers from the Chief

Executive's Directorate, to review the Terms of Reference.

It was agreed:- (1) That the Terms of Reference and Membership be revised and circulated to existing members for comment.

(2) That an update be provided for the next meeting.

55. ROTHERHAM ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

David Rhodes reported that there had been significant changes to this and it had not yet been formally signed off by either the Strategic Leadership Team or the Local Strategic Partnership.

Reference was again made to changes to the national indicators and to lead officers.

It was therefore proposed to revise the Strategy and Plan and report through the various Boards and groups.

It was suggested that a timescale needed to be included and for input from the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel to be sought.

Karl Battersby, Strategic Director, Environment and Development Services, pointed out the budget difficulties.

It was agreed:- (1) That the Strategy and Plan be revised and submitted to the various Boards, Groups etc and the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel.

(2) That an update be provided at the next meeting.

56. FOOD GROWING IN PARKS - PILOT PROJECTS UPDATE

Bill Cooper, Green Spaces Development Manager, reported on the following pilot projects:-

Clifton Park Walled Garden:- development work had been undertaken by the Horticultural Officer with community groups and schools looking at using the walled garden for growing food. Planting beds were being prepared.

Cottage Garden at Thrybergh Country Park:- this was partially enclosed but not totally secure. The aim of the project was for people with learning disabilities to work with a ranger to grow produce to use in the café. It would also be used for other environmental activities. Funding from the Wentworth South Area Assembly had provided a poly-tunnel and raised beds.

Rosehill Victoria Park, Rawmarsh:- this pilot proposed to establish planting beds to the rear of the park working with the Area Partnership

and youth club to explore the potential for growing vegetables. However posters placed within the park had not stimulated any interest and reservations had been expressed in connection with issues like dog fouling and theft of produce and by the Friends group about the location and the site not being secure.

Members present raised and discussed the following:-

- Could produce grown at Clifton Park be used in the museum café?
- Could the proposed tree planting at Newhill Park include trees for the different cultures? Funding for this particular project was for fruit trees only.
- opportunities to be explored re: educating people to grow fruit and vegetables with flower borders.
- the issue of security at sites and the fencing off of sites.
- opportunities for exemplar planting in parks which was both edible and ornamental.
- a virtual garden and other information.
- the waiting list of allotments in some areas of the borough.

Other issues raised included:-

Newhill Park:- the Chairman thanked VAR for securing funding for the development of a fruit orchard at this site.

Forthcoming Food Conference: there would be a traditional garden designer speaking about the potential for growing food.

57. ROTHERHAM IN ROOT

Nikky Wilson reported on the forthcoming Community Food Conference to be held on Tuesday, 1st February, 2011 at 6 pm at The Hub, Canklow, to promote, encourage and support people to grow more food locally.

There 60 different people had been booked on the event.

The programme out line included different speakers:- (1) a landscape designer; (2) Andy Wright from the Youth Service (who had worked on a project in Maltby with young people growing vegetables and using them in the café); (3) someone keeping hens (including hen).

It was explained that LABGI money left over had been transferred to VAR and this was being used for the conference which was an opportunity to promote and announce that funds were available for small groups to set up small garden projects.

A request was made for any hardcopy handouts to be provided for Elected Members as they would be unable to attend this event due to a prior commitment. Karl Battersby agreed to check his diary and if available open the conference.

It was confirmed there would be a schools representative from Coleridge Food for Life Project, at the conference. Unfortunately the South Yorkshire Time Change Project Officer whose role was to support schools in this area had been put back due to the sustainable schools initiative being shelved. There were discussions with Council representatives about supporting ECO Schools accreditation based around sustainable development education, which was a national/international award that so far had escaped the Government changes.

Groundwork Dearne Valley commented that they had found it difficult recently because that initiative had been removed. They had work ready to do but schools found it difficult to timetable it in.

58. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Mayor, Councillor McNeely, emphasised the importance of involving children in sustainability and asked that the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and Developing Learning Opportunities for Children be asked to find a way to encourage schools to become more involved in sustainability.

It was agreed:- That David Rhodes/Deborah Fellowes would liaise with Partnership members re: future agenda items.

59. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following issues were raised:-

(i) Continuation of the Sustainability Partnership

Reference was made to the review of the Local Strategic Partnership, restructuring of partner organisations, loss of the theme boards etc.

Reference was also made to the fact that Government priorities did not include environmental considerations or sustainability.

Karl Battersby reported that there was some discussion about replacing the Achieving Theme Board by an Enterprise Board (the local vision of the Local Economic Partnership). There was some thought that sustainability was essential and cross cutting and should have a direct relationship with that Board. Further discussions would take place.

(ii) Vehicle Poster Competition

Hugh Long reported on the huge success of this competition which schools had taken part in. The Mayor had chosen the posters. There would be 28 vehicles with children's names on, and five full-size posters. The competition winners would also be invited to tea with the Mayor.

(iii) Green Bin Cardboard trial

Hugh Long reported on the success of this trial over the Christmas and New Year period. The results from the first load had revealed a very low level of contamination (between 1% and 1½%) and would thus generate some revenue. Consideration would therefore be given to continuing the scheme Dec 2011/Jan 2012.

60. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed:- That the next meeting of the Sustainability Partnership be held on Wednesday, 30th March, 2011 at 2.00 p.m. – Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.