

**ROTHERHAM CULTURAL CONSORTIUM
WEDNESDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 2004**

Present:- Councillor Boyes (in the Chair); Councillor Littleboy and Brian Beeley, Mr. R. Bye, Ms. C. Cox, Sarah Davey, Mr. D. Gayton, Mr. R. Newman, Mr. D. Rowley, Esme Temple and Mrs. J. Williams.

R.M.B.C. Officers:-

Tony Preston, Business Development Manager, Culture, Leisure & Lifelong Learning
Guy Kilminster, Manager, Libraries, Museums and Arts
Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, Culture, Leisure & Lifelong Learning
Steve Hallsworth, Business Manager, Leisure and Green Spaces, Culture, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
Richard Poundford, Head of Rotherham Investment and Development Office

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Austen and St. John, Tony Clabby, Steve Blackbourn, Marie Hayes, Michael Bishop, Stuart Lister and Phil Rogers.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18TH FEBRUARY, 2004

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

3. MATTER ARISING

The Old Three Cranes, High Street

A question was raised regarding the current position on the usage and ownership of this building.

It was reported that discussions were presently taking place with the owner of the store regarding future opening hours and state of the building.

4. ROTHERHAM RENAISSANCE - YOUR VIEWS COUNT

Richard Poundford gave a presentation on the present situation with regard to Rotherham Town Centre Renaissance – a project funded and supported by Yorkshire Forward, involving a panel of internationally renowned architects and designers and which set in place a new way of regenerating the region's towns and cities.

The presentation covered the following issues:-

- What urban renaissance is and what it is about

- 10 goals – as identified in the vision document
- Emerging masterplan
- Timescales – both short and long-term
- Makeup of the Town Team

An aerial view of a Master Plan model was shown and examples given of the following artist's concept plans:-

- Westgate Basin – Rainbow Bridge
 - Homes, Offices and Shops
 - Redevelopment of Markets and College Area
 - New Civic Centre, Culture and Arts Facilities
 - Riverside Living - as compared to Leeds, York and Bristol
- Links to RCAT and Clifton Park
 - Use of green public spaces and boulevards
- Exchange Quarter – “College Green”
- New Swimming Pool – St. Ann's site – completion by 2007
- Forge Island development options
- Ownership/Lease issues/Private Sector Investment

The following two projects were under way:-

- Moorgate Crofts (Managed Business Centre)
- Development of Speeds Building, High Street

Consortium members were encouraged to give their views which would be fed into the consultation process.

Issues were raised and the following questions responded to:-

- parking strategy
- situation with Tesco – Guest and Chrimes site/planning issues
- Town Team – working together
- need for a good internal bus/railway system in order to maximize public access to shopping sites
- Supertram
- Need to encourage public to shop in town centre
- Projected costings
- Centenary Way – public access routes, including facilities for elderly and disabled - bridges/road lowering

It was emphasised that work within the planning stages was concentrating on the adoption of a Master Plan which had to be agreed by all parties.

Agreed:- That Richard Poundford be thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.

5. FUTURE PERFECT: ROTHERHAM'S CULTURAL STRATEGY

Quarterly update reports were given on the implementation of individual

elements of the Future Perfect Action Plan, as follows:-

Libraries - Three years ago the service had not met Library Standards. However, since the refurbishment of libraries the service was meeting 19 of the 26 public library standards – an improvement from 5 out of 28 in 2001. This was attributable to the hard work of staff, management and investment in the service.

In addition, the Service has been nominated by the Charter Mark Assessors for a quality standard. This is in recognition of a high quality of public service delivery and customer care. The Service would be the first to achieve this status in RMBC, which was again attributable to the hard work of staff and management.

Councillor Boyes added that Rotherham had been highlighted as the best of the nine Authorities inspected by the assessors.

Museum – Work on Clifton Park Museum’s refurbishment was in the last stage of completion. Exhibition fit out was well underway and staff will move back some time in October and be trained on new systems. A re-opening date of 29th January, 2005 was being publicised.

Archives and Local Studies – Sarah Wickham, new Principal Officer was to start this week . Sarah was looking forward to meeting people who wished to talk to her on matters concerning archives and local studies, knowledge from members of this consortium being particularly encouraged. It was hoped to fully open the section once Sarah was settled in due to there having been temporary closures due to staffing shortages.

A comment was made that archives staff had done a very good job during the difficult period following Tony Munford’s sudden death.

Theatre and Community Arts – The Cultural Diversity Festival at the Rotherham Show had been very successful, with very positive feedback from participants and audiences.

Participation in the work of the Town Team would continue, particularly regarding the replacement of the Civic Theatre, Regimental Museum and Art Gallery.

Pantomime – The sale of tickets for this year’s pantomime was very good.

Leisure and Green Space – External funding used for staffing the Sports Development Team had ceased. However, a core team had been established which was now a permanent RMBC team. A number of key pieces of work had started to happen as a result. These included links with local ethnic minorities – All Pakistan Women’s Association - and the introduction of a community coach as a result of joint funding through

Sports Partnership/Sport England. This was a three year contract.

Space for Sport and Arts Facilities – All in place for Junior School sites. The feedback was very positive on the sports facilities which was being well used and accessed by all members of the community.

Green Space Audit – This was a key piece of work alongside the Green Space Strategy looking at the use of green space, identifying equity across the Borough and looking at current green space resources and how to target them more effectively. Work was presently being evaluated and the final document would be very useful in attracting both capital and external funding.

The Football Foundation in particular is keen to develop grass pitches as well as outdoor facilities.

A decision was still awaited on an application to the Football Foundation for a Football Development Officer to work in the community to raise participation for boys/girls and adults. The application had now been passed to the Football Foundation Panel prior to submission to the Board. This was a five year post funded by the Football Foundation.

In addition, the service had secured a post of PE and Sports Development Officer.

Councillor Boyes made the point that, as well as quantity, the audit was about the quality of provision.

Sports Colleges – Two Sports Colleges in Rotherham funded by DfES to develop a series of sports to all secondary schools. A person was being identified to develop School Club links. Strategy to (1) offer opportunities in exercise and fitness and (2) maximise links in the community to encourage young people to participate in sport - Active Mark and Sports Mark status which demonstrates that Schools are linking inside and out of the community. This was to be publicised in Rotherham Matters.

Urban Park Ranger Scheme – There had been positive feedback from several people about this service. A further year's funding had been secured.

Members of the Consortium raised the following questions with regard to the ranger service:-

- such a valuable service to the community it should be mainstream funded
- believed that the service was the way to encourage general public to use parks
- mis-use of skateboarding facilities – security issues demonstrating need for ranger service

Councillor Boyes gave an assurance that the important role of the rangers was acknowledged within the Council, that the matter was under constant review and was dependent on funding. Ways of delivering the service through funding opportunities was constantly being explored.

Heritage Parks – The preferred consultants have been selected for the work on Clifton and Boston Parks.

Herringthorpe Leisure Centre – It was confirmed that the Centre would be demolished and re-built, the timescale for which would depend on the whole programme of redevelopment. It was intended to sustain current facilities for as long as possible until the new facilities opened. Depending on proposals by builders, it may be possible to build around the old building whilst still being used.

Local Tourism Partnership – A background to the formation of the Partnership was given since the restructuring to National and Regional tourism. Yorkshire Forward have not been prescriptive about what the restructuring should look like but are concerned about a sub-regional approach to be able to put forward a joint bid for tourism. A sub-group had been established to determine the roles, functions and responsibilities of what such an organisation in South Yorkshire would represent.

It was not Rotherham's intention to give up the strength of the work already established through the tourism centre, and one which other Local Authorities are trying to model themselves on.

Consultants were being asked to submit an interim report in November and it was hoped to put work in place early next year on (1) a proposal for a vision for tourism for South Yorkshire, joining together the different projects and (2) to come together in terms of marketing to attract longer stay opportunities.

Reference was made to interesting tourism sites in the area such as – The Churches Tourism – Countryside and Walking Festival – Roche Abbey.

Commercial and Promotional Services – Achievements over recent months were highlighted. These included – 2nd Rotherham Cultural Conference. The theme was Marketing Culture and good presentations had been given from Magna, Sports Development, Friends of Clifton Park Museum, Get Sorted Crew and Youth Cabinet. Workshops had taken place in the afternoon, culminating in a Marketing Took Kit being issued to all delegates who attended.

The event had been poorly attended with only 20 organisations being represented compared to 45-50 the first year.

One member commented on how good the Conference had been, despite the poor attendance, and suggested the event be re-launched.

There had been a number of good high profile publications over the last few months – Theatre brochure, Annual Review of Culture and Swimming leaflet, Rotherham Show and Children’s Publicity.

A discussion ensued on the prices of food and drink at Rotherham Show.

Guy Kilminster explained how the charging system was calculated, part of which was towards supporting the cost of the free show, and suggested this could be addressed at the point of specifications for tenders being sent to caterers next year.

6. **CULTURAL CONSORTIUM ADVISORY PANELS**

Sport and Leisure – Steve Hallsworth thanked Members of the Consortium who had contributed to the work of the Panel.

As part of the consultation process, Sport and Leisure staff had been looking at broadening the vision.

A one year Sport and Development Plan would be submitted to the next meeting, one of the issues for consideration being whether to broaden the membership and remit of the sports forum.

The issue of children’s health and active leisure was raised. This would continue to be discussed with Health Partnership members.

A similar issue remains with elderly people.

Heritage, Archives & Tourism – The last meeting had been poorly attended and no business had been conducted. The two members present had discussed with officers how they could best be arranged to allow more people to attend. Consideration had been given to merging groups.

One member agreed with this suggestion.

An issue was raised regarding the use of blue heritage plaques to be displayed at well known pottery sites and which were a feature of major towns and cities. For example, Rockingham Pottery would be a good example of the excellent work in this area.

The Libraries, Museums and Arts Manager agreed to look into this suggestion and believed a previous Conservation Officer had concluded it was a case of a lack of funding for this initiative.

Green Spaces – Phil Gill thanked Members of the Consortium who had contributed to a series of stimulating and open discussions. Major themes have included:-

1. Review of the scope and organisation of Green Space related services in Rotherham

2. Consideration of progress on Playing Pitch Strategy and Green Space Strategy

It was felt the Green Space Advisory Panel had a key role to play in the development of these strategies.

3. Following and advising on the development of the Urban Park Ranger Service

The Panel has expressed concerns about future funding for this service, and it has offered useful views about the role the rangers already have and the potential they have to meet some of the needs of the service.

4. Individual sites or issues

The panel has looked into numerous site-specific issues also. These have included the future of Rother Valley Country Park, the YES Project and Bar Park.

The role and membership of the Panel was being reviewed, although it represents a good cross-section of interest groups.

A concern was expressed by a Panel member that the Trees and Woodlands Section was not part of the Education, Culture and Leisure Services Programme Area.

It was pointed out that despite this, efforts would be made to ensure that all parties ultimately sign up to agreeing the same objectives. This included working with other green space providers including CISWO and parish councils.

7. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP - CULTURAL STRATEGY ACTION PLAN AND COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Reference was made to a number of DCMS Cultural documents which all emphasised that culture had a central role to play in both economic and community regeneration.

It was also recognised very strongly that the local Strategic Partnership of the Rotherham Partnership should be representing culture within its makeup and for culture to be championed as part of that Partnership.

The issue of the most appropriate way for the Partnership to become engaged with culture was being progressed.

It was hoped to be in a position to report further on this matter at the next

meeting.

8. THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE CULTURAL PROSPECTUS

It was reported that South Yorkshire Culture met on a 6-8 weekly basis bringing together all senior officers from neighbouring Authorities, together with representation from Regional Agencies.

The meeting was chaired by an officer from Yorkshire Cultural and the work of the Committee was to draw up a cultural prospectus identifying issues/ongoing work for cultural activity across the sub-region.

The business was to consider a lengthy list of priorities and negotiation was taking place with officers in other Local Authorities.

This would be a useful document at the point of looking at funding opportunities.

9. LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

This item was deferred pending further information from the Scrutiny Section on the issue of co-optees on to the Lifelong Learning Opportunities Scrutiny Panel.

10. 3RD ROTHERHAM CULTURAL CONFERENCE, 2005

The meeting discussed planning arrangements for the 3rd Cultural Conference to be held in 2005.

It was agreed it was a worthwhile event. Volunteers were sought to undertake the initial planning.

Issues included:-

- Who to invite – need to involve a wide range of specific groups
- Need for a major speaker to be invited
- Need for greater publicity/early programming

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Rotherham Show

Members of the Consortium asked for thanks to be extended to the staff involved in the organisation of Rotherham Show.

The event had been very successful, well attended and greatly enjoyed.

Sealed Knot – Battle in the Park

Praise was given for the organisation of the above spectacular outdoor

event. Approximately 25,000 visitors had attended over a two day period.

Participants had thoroughly enjoyed themselves and been very pleased with the venue and public interest.

Membership of the Consortium

The meeting discussed the membership of this Consortium.

A suggestion to explore links with diversity groups would be pursued.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of this Consortium be held on 8th December, 2004.