

**AREA ASSEMBLY CHAIRS
MONDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2013**

Present:- Councillor McNeely (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Beaumont, Currie, Dodson, J. Hamilton, N. Hamilton, Johnston, Read, Sims, Swift and Wallis.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Falvey, Havenhand and Whelbourn.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th June, 2013, were noted.

6. AREA ASSEMBLY CHAIRS/AP MANAGERS UPDATES

Shaun Mirfield, Area Partnership Manager, together with the respective Area Assembly Chairs, gave the following reports:-

Rotherham North/Rotherham South

- Walkabout in Ferham at 5.00 p.m. that evening
- Thornhill Recreation Ground – work with Masbrough Youth Forum and Green Spaces in relation to possible siting of mugga on the old site
- St. John's Green – a lot of work had been carried out to try and address problems in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour. Discussions had now started in relation to physical work in an attempt to design out some of the problems
- Deprived Neighbourhoods event to be held on 23rd October at the New York Stadium to particularly discuss issues relating to Ferham, Eastwood, East Dene, Canklow and the Town Centre
- Monthly NAG meetings were held with the key issues being:-
 - Safeguarding training for Members and partners had been arranged due to the child sexual exploitation issues and concerns with regard to reporting channels in the area
 - Eastwood Village – there were concerns about a range of issues to which prioritisation had been given. The strategic leads for Eastwood were currently arranging a meeting with the Police District Management Team to discuss some of those concerns and would be reporting back shortly. A Neighbourhood Pride Agreement had been agreed which principally covered noise, waste management and anti-social behaviour and produced in both English and Slovakian. Work was taking place with a number of organisations and trying to get people to sign up to it and put a sticker in their window.
 - Discussions were taking place regarding the ongoing issues around Gerard Road

- Well attended Fun Feast Days held at Eastwood and Mowbray Gardens

Wentworth North

- Albany Road play area now open
- Area Plan had been implemented
- Dog fouling bags had been purchased and distributed in the area
- Graffiti art project in conjunction with the Police
- Work with RiDO in writing to all local businesses requesting sponsorship for Christmas lights in Wath

Wentworth South

- Successful funding application for Community Organisers – 5 would be recruited in the East Herringthorpe area
- Successful event at Mowbray Gardens targeted at East Herringthorpe and Eastwood

Rother Valley South

- Work taking place on the Gallery Town project

Wentworth Valley

- Holding a number of events, clean ups etc. on Birks Holt, China Town, Model Village and Flanderwell
- Walkabout had continued as well as the concentration of work in the deprived communities

Rother Valley West

- DDPO signs had been displayed in the villages

Resolved:- That the reports be noted.

7. COMMUNITY FIRST UPDATE

Shaun Mirfield, Neighbourhood Partnerships, submitted an update on Community First as at 17th June, 2013, together with the progress of Years 1 and 2 funded projects.

Appendix I to the report submitted showed that 145 projects had benefitted from the funding. Each project was required to submit a monitoring form to the Community Development Foundation (CDF) within a month of completing their work. Panels were seeking to obtain copies so that progress report could be compiled.

All Panels had refreshed their plans/priorities for Year 3 and registered with the CDF by 31st March, 2013. Appendix II illustrated that Panels were continuing to make excellent progress with 2/3 of the Year 3 funding having been allocated 6 months into the year as a result of which a further 53 projects would benefit.

As well as the £30M Neighbourhood Grant Programme, the Cabinet Office had highlighted 2 other elements of Community First i.e. £50M Endowment Match Challenge and Community Organisers. A meeting had been arranged with the CDF to clarify the targets for the Endowment Match Challenge and ascertain what links could be made locally with Community First.

A successful application had been submitted for 2 East Herringthorpe Community Organisers, based at High Greave School, for Community Organisers.

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

(2) That discussions take place with the Rawmarsh High Street Centre with regard to submitting progress reports.

8. **AREA ASSEMBLIES AND AREA ASSEMBLY CO-ORDINATING GROUPS MEETINGS**

David Richmond, Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods, submitted a report on the purpose of Area Assembly Co-ordinating Group meetings.

A workshop held in November, 2012, with Area Chairs had identified that some of the Groups' work was now taking place in order forums. It was acknowledged that the extent of this varied in each area depending upon the area's priorities and the number of other forums within that particular area.

It was felt it would be beneficial to have a more flexible approach to partnership and meeting structures which were relevant to and met the needs of each Area Assembly area enabling more decision making and empowerment at a local level. It would also allow individual Area Co-ordinating Groups to review their membership based on local issues and requirements within their areas. It would also support strengthening links with disadvantaged communities' activity, Community First, address major issues such as Welfare Reform and increase capacity with the voluntary and community sector.

It was proposed that the following be discussed at Area Co-ordinating Groups and their views sought on (numbering refers to sections of Article 12 of the Council's Constitution):-

Recommended Changes to Article 12

(3) Area Assemblies shall meet at least 6 times a year at publicised locations within the areas they cover

Recommended Change: Area Assemblies shall meet at least 4 times a year at publicised locations within the areas they cover.

(6) The Co-ordinating Group shall comprise the 9 Elected Members for the Electoral Wards within the area, 6 representatives of partner

organisations and 3 community representatives

Recommended Change: The co-ordinating Group shall comprise of the 9 Elected Wards within the area, representatives of partner organisations and community representatives

Individual Co-ordinating Groups would have the flexibility to determine who and how many partners/community organisations would sit on the Group with partners/community organisations invited as appropriate in line with the Group's Area Plan/priorities.

Recommended Changes to Terms of Reference

(3) The role of the Area Assemblies shall be to:-

- Encourage access and participation from local residents in the democratic process
- Develop a single Area Plan for the Area Assembly that is recognised by all agencies operating within the area
- Set local delivery targets and monitor progress towards these targets
- Review the impact and co-ordination of Council policies and services and those of other organisations who deliver services in the areas which the Assembly covers
- Consider issues of local concern and to submit reports to the relevant Cabinet Member, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Rotherham Partnership on these
- Comment on issues referred by Cabinet, the relevant Cabinet Member, Scrutiny and Rotherham Partnership
- Indicate views on a range of issues which require local consultation
- Receive and consider the report of any Task and Finish Group set up by the Co-ordinating Group and determine any appropriate action
- Consider funding proposals for the expenditure of devolved budgets submitted to the Area Assembly by the Co-ordinating Group

Recommended Change: Remove 'single Area Plan' and replace with 'develop partnership Area Plans where required as identified by the Co-ordinating Group'.

Recommended Change: remove 'set local delivery targets and monitor progress'. Add in 'work with community and voluntary organisations to ensure their involvement in local decisions and where possible to increase their capacity to deliver within their community'.

(4) Area Assemblies shall hold public meetings at least six times a year at publicised locations within the areas they cover. Such meetings shall be attended by the elected Members, representatives of other public bodies, voluntary and commercial organisations operating within the area (whether or not represented on the Area Assembly Co-ordinating Group) and members of the public.

Recommended Change: Area Assemblies will hold meetings at least 4 times a year. The format and dates for these meetings to be decided by each Co-ordinating Group.

(6) The Co-ordinating Group shall comprise:-

- The nine elected Members for the electoral wards within the area.
- Six representatives of partner organisations.
- Three community representatives.

Recommended change: The Co-ordinating Group membership shall comprise the 9 Elected Members for the Electoral Wards within the area. The partner and community organisations will be identified by the Co-ordinating Group on an annual basis based on local needs identified through Area planning processes.

(8) The six representatives of partner organisations shall in all cases include a representative of South Yorkshire Police, 2010 Rotherham Limited, NHS Rotherham and where applicable a Parish Council representative to be chosen by the Parish Councils within the area. These representatives and the elected Members shall jointly appoint the remaining representatives of partner organisations.

Recommended change: Delete this paragraph. See recommended changes to (6) above.

(9) The three community representatives will be appointed by the elected Members and the representatives of partner organisations following public advertisement within the area, for a term of four years.

Recommended change: Remove 'three' and change to 1 year of office. Add in 'a community representative who wishes to continue as a member of the group after his/her term of office has expired may, with the agreement of the co-ordinating group, extend his/her representation for a further year. The post does not need to be publically advertised'.

(10) The Co-ordinating Group may co-opt representatives of other partner organisations or community representatives for such particular projects or periods of time as the Co-ordinating Group shall determine.

Recommended change: include the wording 'when approved by the Chair of the Co-ordinating Group'.

(11) Meetings of the Co-ordinating Group shall be held at least six times a year. A quorum must include at least three of the elected Members of the Co-ordinating Group and at least three other members of the Group.

Recommended change: Meetings of the Co-ordinating Group shall be held at least twice a year.

Recommended change – a quorum must include at least three elected members and at least 1/3 of the remainder of the Group

The quorum must remain as 3 elected members, but the recommendation changes the partnership/ community representatives from a specific number to 1/3 of the remainder of the group including partners and community representatives. The Chair or Vice Chair would still need to be present to hold the meeting. Please note that Standing Order 22 (2) requires at least 3 members to hold a meeting which is a committee of the Council.

(12) Substitute Members are not permitted at meetings of the Co-ordinating Group. If a partner representative or community representative fails to attend the Co-ordinating Group for three consecutive meetings, then the Co-ordinating Group shall consider the reasons for non-attendance and may appoint a replacement partner or community representative as the case may be.

Recommended change: *Change the terms “partner representative” and “community representative” and replace with the term “co-optee”.*

(14-21) Area Assembly Devolved Budget Procedure.

Recommended change: *remove attachment, but not reference to the budget. The procedure is outdated and is no longer relevant. New procedures will be drawn up specific to any allocated future budgets. Reference to the devolved budget to be retained to allow capacity for Co-ordinating Groups to administer any devolved budgets in the future.*

(23) The Area Chairs shall meet at least six times a year together with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods who shall chair each meeting.

Recommended change: *The Area Chairs shall meet quarterly.*

Voting Rights

It was proposed during the consultation that all members of the co-ordinating group should have voting rights. Concern had been expressed that representatives from the community would not engage with the process fully if they did not have voting rights while 1 Co-ordinating Group acknowledged the benefits of accountability of Elected Members if they had sole voting rights. However, the value of co-optees was also recognised. The consensus was that partners and community representatives should have voting rights.

Legal Services had been consulted and advised that changes could be made subject to Cabinet approval. No proposals for change were recommended.

Discussions ensued on the report and of the purpose of Co-ordinating Groups in general. The majority opinion was that they had no purpose now that there was no devolved budget and that it was quite often a repetition of discussions at the NAG/Area Assemblies. Given staffing

resources within the Authority and partner agencies the Co-ordinating Groups were an extra burden.

Resolved:- (1) That consultation take place as to the whether Co-ordinating Groups should continue.

(2) That a further report be submitted on the outcome of the consultation.

9. AREA PARTNERSHIP TEAM STAFFING UPDATE

Area Assembly Chairs expressed their concerns regarding the workload for the remaining Area Assembly Team.

Thanks were given to the Area Partnership Managers and their Teams for their ongoing work.

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods reported that Sarah's post, during her period of maternity leave, would be advertised and recruited to.

10. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Colleagues in Emergency Planning would be sending a letter to Parish Councils following up on a workshop. Once that information had been gathered, a report would be submitted to a future Area Assembly meeting.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING -

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Monday, 11th November, 2013, commencing at 2.00 p.m.