

# ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Environment and Climate Change Group

**14<sup>th</sup> October 2013 @ 12:30pm**  
**Conference Room 2, Town Hall**

### **Present:**

Cllr K Wyatt ( <b>Chairperson</b> )	RMBC
Laura Mellor ( <b>Minutes</b> )	RMBC
Zafar Saleem	RMBC
David Rhodes	RMBC
Paul Smith	RMBC
Carolyn Jones	RMBC
Phil Gill	RMBC
Richard Pett	RMBC
Shirley Hallam	RMBC
Bronwen Knight	RMBC

		Action
1.	<b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b>  Cllr Wallis & Cllr Watson	
2.	<b><u>Previous Minutes</u></b>  Cllr Wyatt gave an update on the LGA scheme Climate Local and RMBC's commitment and future actions.  DR stated that the Environment and Climate Change Strategy has been sent to the LGA with the signed commitment and annual updates will be required.	<b>All to note</b>  <b>DR</b>
3.	<b><u>Report on Environment and Climate Change Strategy key area and objectives "Built and Natural Environment"</u></b>	
	<b>2.1.1 Development of Site Management Plans - Phil Gill</b>  See attached Site Management Plans Report at Appendix A	<b>All to note</b>
	<b>2.1.2 Implementation of Rights of way improvement plan - Richard Pett</b>  A verbal report was given covering the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramblers; cyclists and landowners project work with £15,000 funding.</li> <li>• 16 specific objectives covering various projects.</li> </ul>	<b>All to note</b>
	<b>2.2 Improve street cleanliness by reducing litter, graffiti, fly tipping and other enviro-crime - Shirley Hallam</b>  A verbal report was given covering the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget cuts have resulted in reduced resources and a review of current and future work practices.</li> <li>• Litter bin review being carried out to identify those that are fit for</li> </ul>	<b>All to note</b>

	Action
<p>purpose; levels of use; misuse e.g. those used for household waste.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic replacement bins cost £300 each hence a phased programme.</li> <li>• Schedules being reviewed and a new approach (named the Blitz) being trialled (involves the entire team doing one day a week in targeted areas). Early results are not positive due to a lack of staff to retain full borough reactive coverage. Lessons learnt will assist in developing alternative approaches.</li> <li>• Mechanical sweeper schedules under review due to an equipment reduction (3 to 2) to improve efficiency.</li> <li>• Awareness campaign reduced to a lack of resources.</li> </ul> <p>DR asked about photovoltaic compactor bins – SH explained the bins are only for lease not for sale and the company wanted a % of savings made hence the arrangement wasn't acceptable and didn't fit with Streetpride plans.</p>	
<p><b>2.3 Conserve existing biodiversity and reduce sources of harm;</b>  <b>2.4 Establish ecological networks through habitat protection, restoration and creation to create ecologically resilient and varied landscapes;</b>  <b>2.5 Maintain environmental evidence base to allow sound ecological decisions to be made;</b>  <b>2.9 Ensure Biodiversity Duty (NERC Act 2006) is implemented in line with recommended Best Practice - Carolyn Jones</b></p> <p>See attached Biodiversity Report at Appendix B</p> <p>Verbal update on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current work with the Biodiversity Forum looking at Council owned sites.</li> <li>• Work with the Countryside Team on a stewardship programme.</li> <li>• 10 year action plans have been set up for 5 sites – Throapham Manor, Ulley Country Park, Thrybergh Country Park, Forgemasters Tip and Warren Vale Nature Reserve.</li> <li>• Local Wildlife Site System is in place and the annual figure is improving 29% last year to 26% this year.</li> <li>• 42% of Council owned sites are in positive management.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Wyatt commented on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits of the Rivers Project.</li> <li>• Asked about progress of the BEE Project - CJ said that they were in the very early draft stage but a meeting to progress the project has been arranged.</li> </ul>	<p><b>All to note</b></p>
<p><b>2.6 Manage Rotherham Woodland - Kevin Burke (Presented by Phil Gill)</b></p> <p>See attached Woodland Report at Appendix C</p> <p>DR to set up a meeting with KB to discuss wood management by-products and the RMBC biomass supply contract.</p>	<p><b>All to note</b></p> <p><b>DR/KB</b></p>

		<b>Action</b>										
	Cllr Wyatt requested an update on the ponds project – PG to discuss with KB.	<b>PG/KB</b>										
	<p><b>2.7 Ensure that asset portfolio's are sustainable by integrating sustainability into all capital and asset management strategies, plans, programmes and projects - Paul Smith</b></p> <p>See attached Estates Report at Appendix D</p> <p>PS commented that the Corporate Landlord goes online from April 2014.</p> <p>Phil Gill informed PS that the Biomass Boiler at Clifton Park was down again. DR said that Steve Cope had been out to have a look at it. DR to look into it.</p> <p>Cllr Wyatt enquired about an old, disused allotment site at Swinton. PG said that they are currently looking at how best to use these sites.</p>	<p><b>All to note</b></p> <p><b>DR</b></p>										
	<p><b>2.8 Employ planning policy to address climate change Bronwen Knight</b></p> <p>See attached Planning Report at Appendix E</p>	<b>All to note</b>										
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Key Area Objectives to be reviewed at the next meeting:</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="336 1028 1182 1514"> <tr><td>1. Strategic Planning and Policy</td></tr> <tr><td><del>2. Built and Natural Environment</del></td></tr> <tr><td>3. Emergency Planning and Recovery, Social Care and Health</td></tr> <tr><td><del>4. Energy and Water</del></td></tr> <tr><td>5. Engagement, Education And Awareness Raising</td></tr> <tr><td><b>6. Housing</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>7. Procurement and Resources</b></td></tr> <tr><td>8. Regeneration and Business</td></tr> <tr><td>9. Transport</td></tr> <tr><td>10. Waste and Recycling</td></tr> </table>	1. Strategic Planning and Policy	<del>2. Built and Natural Environment</del>	3. Emergency Planning and Recovery, Social Care and Health	<del>4. Energy and Water</del>	5. Engagement, Education And Awareness Raising	<b>6. Housing</b>	<b>7. Procurement and Resources</b>	8. Regeneration and Business	9. Transport	10. Waste and Recycling	<b>All to note</b>
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<b>5.</b>	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>A meeting had been arranged with Tom Sweetman to discuss publicising the Climate Local commitment and benefits to Rotherham. DR requested that if anyone could think of any examples of good practice they would like to be communicated to send them through to him.</p>	<b>All to note</b>										
<b>6.</b>	<p><b><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014 - 12:30pm – 1:30pm, Town Hall</p>	<b>All to note</b>										

## Appendix A to ECCG Minutes 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013

<b>key Area</b>	<i>BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</i>
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	<i>Phil Gill, Leisure and Green Spaces Manager</i>
<b>Date</b>	<i>September 2013</i>
<p><b>Objective 1:</b> 2.1 Manage and improve the quality and accessibility of parks, open spaces and public rights of way</p> <p>Key Action 2.1.1 Development of Site Management Plans</p>	
<p>Management plans have been updated for 2 country parks (Rother Valley and Thrybergh) and 3 urban parks (Clifton, Bradgate and Rosehill). These have been independently scrutinised and approved as part of the Green Flag award scheme, all five parks having received the award in July 2013.</p> <p>Management plans are also in place for RMBC countryside sites; this is reported on separately under '<i>Objective 2.3 Conserve existing biodiversity and reduce sources of harm</i>'</p>	
<b>a. Links to national / local performance indicators</b>	
n/a	
<b>b. Obstacles</b>	
n/a	
<b>c. Resources</b>	
Management plans and green flag entries have been prepared from within existing resources	
<b>Next Steps and Future Actions</b>	
Review whether cost of applying for Green Flag can be justified in the context of reducing financial resources, including exploration of Natural England's 'Country Parks Accreditation' scheme as a lower cost alternative for the country parks.	

## Appendix B to ECG Minutes 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013

<b>key Area</b>	<i>Built and Natural Environment</i>
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	<i>Carolyn Jones</i>
<b>Date</b>	<i>14 Oct 2013</i>
<b>Objective 1: 2.3 Conserve existing biodiversity and reduce sources of harm</b>	
<p>Rotherham's 2012 Biodiversity Action Plan is now adopted and available on the RMBC website; a delivery plan has been drafted to consider actions to be taken by RMBC and by other BAP partners.</p> <p>RMBC Green Spaces priority countryside sites are managed according to management plans; a small number of plans require updating and they will be reviewed during 2013. Management is being supported by a successful Higher Level Stewardship agreement with Natural England.</p> <p>The Local Wildlife Site system is in place to identify sites of substantive interest and to protect these sites within the planning system. An annual performance figure is calculated each year and submitted to Defra to show the proportion of Local Sites that are in positive conservation management; the 2012 figure was 29%, the 2013 figure will be calculated in September 2013.</p> <p>Biodiversity and geodiversity have strategic objectives for conservation within the Local Plan Core Strategy; development management policies for these areas have been prepared and included in the draft Sites &amp; Policies document.</p>	
<b>Objective 2: 2.4 Establish ecological networks through habitat protection, restoration and creation to create ecologically resilient and varied landscapes</b>	
<p>Green Infrastructure has been included in the Core Strategy and the draft Sites &amp; Policies document. We are currently relying on mapping and project coordination at a South Yorkshire level. There have been no resources identified at this stage for a Rotherham GI strategy or detailed mapping.</p> <p>RMBC has worked in partnership with the Wildlife Trust (Sheffield &amp; Rotherham) and the Environment Agency on a Rotherham Rivers project as part of the Living Don Programme. The project has been successful in agreeing funding with WREN and Natural England (£226,929.00 and £13,880.00 respectively) and will be delivered September 2013 to 2016 enhancing and connecting 11 river and wetland sites.</p> <p>Additional work is needed to adequately map and understand Rotherham's ecological networks and ecosystem functions.</p>	
<b>Objective 3: 2.5 Maintain environmental evidence base to allow sound ecological decisions to be made</b>	

The Rotherham Biological Records Centre service has been reduced from 1FTE to 0.6FTE in recent years. The BRC database currently holds over 1.5million records of wildlife in Rotherham and validation systems are in place to ensure the data is sound.

Data submitted is mostly from members of the public and in the main relates to publically accessible areas or residential gardens. Additional resources would enable focused ecological survey work to fill data gaps and monitor changes.

**Objective 4:** 2.9 Ensure Biodiversity Duty (NERC Act 2006) is implemented in line with recommended Best Practice.

NERC Act Biodiversity Duty promotion has been limited in the last year although most service areas are aware of the Duty and its implications for work.

**a. Links to national / local performance indicators**

SDL160 – Number of Local Sites in positive management

**b. Obstacles**

Limited staff time to cover the full extent of biodiversity work.

**c. Resources**

**Next Steps and Future Actions**

Continue to deliver Ecology and Biological Records work programmes.

## Appendix C to ECCG Minutes 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013

<b>key Area</b>	Built and Natural Environment
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Kevin Burke
<b>Date</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2013
<b>Objective 1</b> 2.6.1 Manage Rotherham's Woodlands: Maintain, manage and conserve trees & woodlands in the borough.	
<p>Grant funding has be awarded by the Forestry Commission under the Woodland Grant Scheme. The fund of £11,000 covers a 5 year period. Its primary focus is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to contribute to the additional costs of providing public benefits that arise from meeting the UK forestry standard for sustainable woodland management;</li> <li>• to protect, increase and maintain the area of woodland under sustainable management and;</li> <li>• to identify and address threats to woodland, prevent decline and increase the capacity for sustainable management.</li> </ul> <p>In addition funding by Natural England will support work at Throapham Manor (Throapham) and Birch Wood (Rawmarsh). The grant will be used to enhance the biological diversity of both woodlands.</p>	
<b>Objective 2:</b> 2.6.2 Identify local market for wood management by-products	
<p>This has not yet been achieved but visits to both Doncaster and Sheffield Council's woodland teams have indicated that there is potential to develop local markets. FCS certification is currently being reviewed.</p>	
<b>Objective 2</b> 2.6.3 Support woodland management projects for socially excluded communities	
<p>This objective is yet to be investigated and developed. However, events are planned for a number of woodlands which aim to encourage wider use by communities of the woodlands.</p>	
<b>a. Links to national / local performance indicators</b>	
<p>Corporate Priority Plan: Improving the environment, 24 planning to adapt to climate change, 27 Reduce CO2 emissions.</p>	
<b>b. Obstacles</b>	
<p>There has been a re structure of the Trees and Woodland Team. Woodland Management is now carried out by the Countryside and Ecology Manager. Individual tree and highway tree issues are managed by the Tree's team. The restructure has achieved a saving of £70,000. Due to the restructure there has been has been a period of resettlement and information gathering.</p>	

**c. Resources**

Countryside and Ecology Team

**Next Steps and Future Actions**

Investigate market for woodland products

Assess woodland priorities

Ensure aims of Woodland Grant Scheme and High level Stewardship are met.

## Appendix D to ECGG Minutes 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013

<b>key Area</b>	2. Built and Natural Environment														
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Paul Smith														
<b>Date</b>	14 October 2013														
<b>Objective 1:</b> 2.7 Ensure that asset portfolio's are sustainable by integrating sustainability into all capital and asset management strategies, plans, programmes and projects															
<p>Key Actions:</p> <p>2.7.1 Promote sustainable design and construction through asset management and procurement practices.</p> <p>RMBC are members of the YORbuild contractors framework (construction framework for Yorkshire and Humber). The framework aims include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon reductions from the supply chain.</li> <li>• Reduce waste to landfill by 50%.</li> <li>• Providing Employment and Skills benefits aiming to increase local employment. A similar process has been adopted on other procurement/projects such as the Responsive Repairs and Maintenance contract with Morrisons</li> </ul> <p>Materials are sourced sustainably where appropriate – for example timber is purchased from sustainable sources and certified.</p> <p>Sustainable features within the design are heavily dependent on the client's budget. A whole-life costing model that could inform the project approval better is in the early stages of development.</p> <p>2.7.2 Adopt environmental sustainability measures within estates management.</p> <p>Sustainability within the management of Corporate property is ensured through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Energy and Green House Gas Emissions – Energy and water efficiency measures were reported to the group in July 2013, however since that report the RMBC Green House Gas Report has been submitted to DECC identifying year on year reductions: <table border="1" data-bbox="343 1473 1327 1621"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2010/11</th> <th>2011/12</th> <th>2012/13</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total Emissions</td> <td>44,586</td> <td>41,681</td> <td>38,718</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emissions from Operational Buildings</td> <td>32,969</td> <td>30,110</td> <td>27,348</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </li> <li>2. "Leaner and Greener" - The Westminster Sustainable Business Forum (WSBF) examined how the public sector could efficiently manage public sector estate to improve economic and environmental efficiency in a time of austerity whilst maintaining and improving service delivery. A further review focused on how savings could be achieved by improving workplace conditions and implementing more flexible ways of working, through reinvesting money saved in rationalising the property portfolio and improving the performance of the retained estate. Corporate Property Team has adopted the best practice recommendations of the 'Leaner Greener Report' through the adoption of Corporate Landlord and assessing and managing property as a resource for service delivery, economic growth and housing provision. Changes in property should be informed by long term service needs, condition and efficiency.</li> <li>3. Riverside House / Workstyle – Monitoring shows reductions in carbon emissions and</li> </ol>					2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total Emissions	44,586	41,681	38,718	Emissions from Operational Buildings	32,969	30,110	27,348
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13												
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subsequently cost since staff moved into Riverside House and the old Town Centre Civic Buildings were closed. Figures show (2012):

Electricity kWh	Gas kWh	Total kWh	Floor Area m <sup>2</sup>	kWh / m <sup>2</sup>	Electricity	Gas	Total
Civic Buildings Pre Riverside							
6,181,495	5,674,042	11,885,537	45,449	260.85	£556,335	£170,221	£726,556
Civic Buildings inc. Riverside House							
4,965,962	2,057,042	7,002,967	30,167	232.8	£446,937	£61,710	£508,647

4. Environmental Management – Legal compliance and environmental improvements across Corporate property is driven and supported through Facilities Management and Corporate Environmental Team.

**a. Links to national / local performance indicators**

- Corporate Plan Outcome 27 - Reduce CO2 emissions and lower levels of air pollution
- Corporate Plan Outcome 24 - Rotherham is prepared for present and future climate change

**b. Obstacles**

1. Funding and budgets

## Appendix E to ECCG Minutes 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013

<b>key Area</b>	Built and Natural Environment
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Bronwen Knight – Planning Manager
<b>Date</b>	14 October 2013
<b>Objective 1:</b> Employ planning policy to address climate change	
<p>Rotherham's Core Strategy (a key element of the Local Plan) was submitted for independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate, which is scheduled to take place in late October through to early November 2013. Climate change is a broad aim that is referred to throughout the document, with numerous strategic policies identified that will serve to mitigate its impacts. These include green infrastructure, dealing with flood risk and renewable energy. Allied to this, a further round of public consultation took place during the summer of 2013 regarding the Sites &amp; Policies document, which identifies where new homes and businesses will be located and also establishes development management policies, which when considered alongside those found in the Core Strategy, will be the basis for the determination of planning applications.</p>	
<b>a. Links to national / local performance indicators</b>	
<p>National Planning Policy Framework Annual Monitoring Report as the main mechanism to assess the Local Plan's performance and effect</p>	
<b>b. Obstacles</b>	
<p>Viability of development Changes in Central government stance e.g. current consultation on housing standards review Transition towards integration in Building Regulations</p>	
<b>c. Resources</b>	
<p>Staff &amp; budgetary resources available from: Development Management Planning Policy Building Regulations Opportunities explored to utilise external knowledge base</p>	
<b>Next Steps and Future Actions</b>	
<p>In next 12 months: Examination &amp; Adoption of Rotherham's Core Strategy Continued progression of the Sites &amp; Policies document Production of Annual Monitoring Report Ongoing determination of Planning Applications as necessary</p>	