

## Joint Working Group

### RMBC and Parish and Town Councils

22<sup>nd</sup> September 2011, Town Hall, Rotherham

#### Present:-

Councillor Mahroof Hussain (Chair)  
Councillor Richard Swann (RS)  
Councillor T Kelsey (TC)  
Councillor Dominic Beck (DB)  
Councillor Jo Burton (JB)  
Peter Foyle (Rural Action Yorkshire)  
Paul Griffiths (PG)

AGENDA	ACTION
<p><b>1. Apologies</b></p> <p>Councillor Pat Wade Councillor Eric Shaw</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>No minutes were taken at the previous meeting.</p>	
<p><b>3. Participatory Budgeting</b></p> <p>Peter Foyle attended representing Rural Action Yorkshire to discuss participatory budgeting project for parish councils in Yorkshire.</p> <p>Participatory budgeting is a process which allows members of a community to participate in making spending decisions about local things that effect them.</p> <p>The advantages are that it promotes public involvement with the parish council, improves positive community activity and raises the profile of the parish council.</p> <p>PF explained that a successful pilot had taken place in North Yorkshire where parish councils had allocated grants to local groups based on the principles of participatory budgeting.</p> <p>Rural Action Yorkshire are keen to run a pilot with a Rotherham parish council. PF will offer advice and guidance to any parish interested and has offered to meet with any parish who has an interest in undertaking any work in this area.</p>	

<p>The working group felt this would be a positive move and would benefit a parish council in the right circumstances. However publicity would be key to it's success.</p> <p>JB asked if it would be a case of who shouts the loudest when it came to the public voting on a project.</p> <p>PF replied that each project would be rated by participants on a 1-10 scale so that should mitigate one project dominating proceedings.</p> <p>DB asked if it would be the case that established groups may feel excluded or threatened by the process?</p> <p>PF replied that the parish council has the choice to open up a small budget to this process whilst maintaining links and relationships with other groups by holding another budget to be allocate using an established method.</p> <p>RS asked about feedback and checks on the spending of funds</p> <p>PF advised that parish councils should carry out checks and request feedback as with any other type of grant funding.</p> <p>MH commented that this process had already been tried in Rotherham e.g through the area assemblies but it is still a good exercise given diminishing budgets. Although there are issues in terms of process and control for parish councils it would be a great tool for engagement.</p> <p>The group asked if PF would present the information at the next Parish Network meeting in November 2011 to provide more widespread publicity.</p>	<p>Item to be placed on agenda for Parish Network meeting November 2011.</p>
<p><b>3. Joint Working/ Request for agenda item by Wentworth Parish Council.</b></p> <p>PG advised the group of an email received from Wentworth parish council requesting that an item be placed on the agenda for the next parish network meeting regarding the way in which parish councils are consulted when major changes are taking place. In this instance the example given is the withdrawal of grounds maintenance support. The email was supported by several other parish councils.</p> <p>The group agreed that it would be useful to explore this item (pending developments with EDS) but with a focus on all wider issues around improving joint working and encouraging collaborative working between parish councils.</p> <p>PG went through the responses from parish councils from the</p>	

<p>joint working questionnaires sent out over the summer. Eleven questionnaires had been received back and the group discussed the responses and agreed that they would form the basis for discussion around joint working moving forward.</p> <p>The group agreed to look at dates with a meeting potentially in November.</p>	<p>PG to confirm date with MH and distribute to group</p>
<p><b>4. Communications Plan</b></p> <p>PG presented a Communications plan to the group to assist RMBC officers when considering the most appropriate route for consulting with Parish and Town Councils.</p> <p>The plan outlined:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The commitments in the Charter regarding communication and consultation.</li> <li>• The various methods open to officer when consulting with parish councils including purpose, frequency and contacts for each method.</li> <li>• Contacts for parish councils including frequency of meetings.</li> </ul> <p>The group agreed that the plan would be a useful tool and will be discussed during the joint working discussions at the next Parish Network meeting.</p>	<p>PG to include plan at next Parish Network meeting</p>
<p><b>5. Joint Working Group Vacancy</b></p> <p>There is currently one vacancy on the group owing to changes at the elections held during May 2011.</p> <p>The group discussed expanding the membership of the group to ensure there was always healthy representation from parish councils at every meeting.</p> <p>It was therefore agreed to expand the membership of the group to 8 parish and town council representatives and the expressions of interest be sought to assess the level of interest.</p> <p>If the response is good then consideration will be given as to the best way to fill the vacancies e.g vote at Parish Network or ballot.</p>	<p>PG to send out expressions of interest.</p>
<p><b>6. Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>10<sup>th</sup> of November 2011 at 4.30pm, Town Hall</p>	