

## Joint Working Group

### RMBC and Parish and Town Councils

15/11/07 Town Hall, Rotherham

#### Present:-

Cllr Jane Austen (JA) Chair  
Nosober Latif (NL)  
Pat Wade (PW)  
Paul Griffiths (PG)  
Peter Sludden (PL)  
Barrie Marsh (BM)

AGENDA	ACTION
<p><b>1. Apologies</b></p> <p>Cllr Mahroof Hussain (MH) Sue Kilcommons (SK)</p>	
<p><b>2. Welcome to new Members</b></p> <p>JA welcomed the new members, gave a brief outline of the remit of the Joint Working group and hoped they enjoy contributing to the work of the group.</p>	
<p><b>3. Nominations to the Joint Working Group</b></p> <p>PG outlined the nominations process that had taken place at the Parish Network on the 20<sup>th</sup> October. Three nominations to the group had been received however the Chair had decided to seek clarity regarding a nomination from an employee of a parish council as opposed to a chair or a clerk. PG advised that he had checked notes from the original discussions around the formation of the group to negotiate the Joint Working Charter. The notes indicated that it had been agreed that the group would consist of parish councillors with the inclusion of one or two parish clerks.</p> <p>The group decided to uphold this original approach and asked that a letter be sent to the third nominee explaining the decision of the group.</p>	<p>PG to send letter to nominee.</p>
<p><b>4. Minutes of the previous meeting</b></p>	

<p>The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record.</p>	
<p><b>5. Feedback from the Parish Network/Dates of Future Meetings</b></p> <p>PG reviewed the Parish Network meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2007.</p> <p>20 parish councillors attended representing 12 parish and town councils.</p> <p>The revised Charter and the Joint Working Group's Annual Report had been well received by the attendees. Copies of both documents have now been sent out to all Parish and Town Councils.</p> <p>PG reported that feedback from the workshops and presentations was very positive and had undoubtedly been useful in a practical sense for many of the attendees. Notes from the workshops and presentations have now been distributed to all Parish and Town Councils.</p> <p>The group expressed some disappointment with the level of attendance. PG advised that he was aware that the Network did clash with a number of local events for some Parish Councils and that the agenda had been sent out during the postal strike (a number had been hand delivered).</p> <p>The group agreed that more notice was required for Parish and Town councils and it would be advantageous to establish dates for forthcoming Network events for the next 12 months. It was agreed to look at hosting three events to compliment the dates agreed for the planning liaison meeting.</p> <p>Discussion followed around the content of the Network event scheduled for the 31/01/08. The group agreed that the Licensing workshop had been particularly successful and it would be useful to carry this over to the next Network meeting as a presentation topic and to put forward this issue for member development training.</p> <p>The group considered other issues to address at the Network including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting young people involved</li> <li>Health and Safety Risk Assessments</li> <li>Code of Conduct</li> </ul> <p>The group agreed it would be useful to look at real life scenarios</p>	<p>PG to contact Councillor Hussain to establish availability.</p> <p>PG to contact Licensing and to discuss member development with Scrutiny.</p>

<p>as part of the Code of Conduct workshop to replicate the kind of scenarios parish councillors face on a regular basis.</p> <p>The group asked that letters to confirm the Parish Network meeting in January 2008 are sent out as soon as possible.</p>	<p>PG to send out letters.</p>
<p><b>5. Role of Parish Councils in the LAA/Sustainable Communities Strategy and Area Plans</b></p> <p>PG handed round a copy of the corporate consultation strategy detailing the mass of consultations held across the borough each year.</p> <p>The group agreed that it would be helpful to invite Asim Munir (Corporate Consultation Officer) to talk about how best to involve parish councils in relevant consultations. The group discussed the perception that the borough council 'does not listen' to opinions expressed during consultations and that little feedback is given following a consultation.</p>	<p>PG to invite Asim Munir to the next JWG meeting.</p>
<p><b>6.Parish Council Election Costs</b></p> <p>JA advised the group that the cost of holding parish council elections is on the increase and it is important that parishes are aware of this and are able to take account of this as part of their financial planning process.</p> <p>This is partly due to the cost of administering alternative methods of holding elections such as postal voting. Parishes need to plan ahead financially so they are prepared in the event of an election being held either in isolation or alongside the borough council elections.</p> <p>The group agreed to request that John Walker (Chief Elections &amp; Electoral Registration Officer) be asked to provide parish councils with a likely cost indicator.</p>	<p>PG to contact John Walker</p>
<p><b>8. Quality Parish Council Status – Impact Assessment</b></p> <p>NL outlined an impact assessment document developed by NL and PG to inform future work around encouraging Quality Status. The Assessment looks to develop support for parish and town councils and examines the impact , risk and cost implication of actions to address any gaps.</p> <p>NL asked that the group examine the document and make any suggestions/comments or amendments at the next meeting of the group.</p>	<p>Joint working group to feedback at the next meeting</p>

<p><b>9. Any other Business</b></p> <p>BM raised the issue of the role of RMBC ward councillors and their interaction with their local parish councils. BM asked if it was a requirement for borough councillors to attend parish meetings. PG stated that the Joint Working Charter indicates that ward members be invited to attend meetings “when appropriate”.</p> <p>JA suggested that a personal invitation be sent to the relevant ward members.</p> <p>JA requested that the joint working group look at devising a protocol regarding how parish councillors approach RMBC staff for information</p>	
<p><b>Date and Time of next meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for the 3rd of January 2008 at 4.30pm at the Town Hall.</p>	