

## Joint Working Group

### RMBC and Parish and Town Councils

29<sup>th</sup> June 2009 Town Hall, Rotherham

#### Present:-

Councillor Mahroof Hussain (Chair)  
Councillor Jane Austen (JA)  
Councillor Eric Shaw (ES)  
Councillor Gary Cooper (GC)  
Councillor Ted Kelsey (TK)  
Councillor Pat Wade  
Paul Griffiths (PG)

AGENDA	ACTION
<p><b>1. Apologies</b></p> <p>Councillor Richard Swann</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</b></p> <p><b>Code of Conduct</b></p> <p>PG advised that he was still waiting for information from Tim Mumford regarding the Code of Conduct information to be posted on the rotherhamparishcouncils.gov.uk website. PG was asked to contact Tim Mumford to see if there had been some delay at Committee level.</p>	<p>PG to contact Tim Mumford.</p>
<p><b>3. Update on Scrutiny Feedback</b></p> <p>PG advised that he had contacted all parish representatives on RMBC committees regarding feedback to all Parishes in the Borough.</p> <p>An outline of the proposal had been given to each representative including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A pro forma to be completed on a twice yearly basis</li><li>• An annual report to the Parish Network.</li></ul> <p>Feedback had been requested by the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2009. Only one response had been received to date however pending any major objections the issue would be moved forward following this.</p>	<p>PG to provide final update at the next meeting of the Joint Working Group.</p>

#### 4. Agenda for the Parish Network meeting

PG advised the group that a EDS parish liaison meeting had been booked for the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009, the day after the proposed Parish Network.

The EDS meeting would focus on the consultation around the core LDF strategy and as such there would be an overlapping of agenda items.

It was felt that it was too much to ask parish councillors and clerks to attend meetings two evenings in a row and it would have a detrimental effect on attendance.

The group discussed combining the two meetings however it was felt that this could result in the meeting being over long. In addition it may be beneficial for there to be a concentration on the LDF consultation events during July to ensure that all Parish Councils have opportunity to contribute.

It was therefore decided that the Network meeting would be deferred to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2009 at the same time and venue. The group asked that all Parish Councils were contacted to explain the position.

#### Rural Communities Guidance

PG ran through guidance received from the Local Government Information Unit regarding the devolution of services to parish councils from the principal authority and parish clustering.

The guidance underlined the Government's position in promoting the delivery of quality local services and providing the best value for local people and provided recent real scenarios outlining the different approaches taken.

To date there has been little interest in parish councils devolving the delivery of any local services from RMBC. The joint working group felt that there may be misunderstanding about how to go about this process and clarification of the procedure is required before considering any further steps.

#### Agenda item requested by Thrybergh Parish Council.

PG explained that he been contacted by the Clerk at Thrybergh Parish Council who had requested that the following item be placed on the Agenda for the next Parish Network meeting:-

"Thrybergh Parish Council would like RMBC departments to act on complaints from Parish Councils as individuals are not prepared to be named for fear of reprisals"

PG to contact all Parish Councils regarding the meeting deferral.

PG to clarify procedure.

<p>PG had spoken the clerk and he had raised a number of issues regarding youth nuisance and fly tipping – however the parish council felt RMBC was not taking appropriate action to resolve the problems. In addition there was some anecdotal evidence of communication barriers with RMBC from other Parish Councils local to Thrybergh.</p> <p>The group acknowledged that such problems are often difficult to resolve particularly if individuals are unwilling to come forward to provide evidence however that at this stage it is an unsuitable agenda item for the Parish Network.</p> <p>The group requested that an updated is obtained from the Area Partnership Manager and that if necessary Councillor Austen will contact Thrybergh on behalf of the Joint Working Group to explore the issue further.</p>	<p>PG to contact APM for Wentworth South.</p>
<p><b>5. Review of the Joint Working Charter/HR guidance</b></p> <p>PG advised the group that he had written to all Parish Councils during May 2009 advising them of the group’s intention to carry out a light review of the Charter. A deadline for suggestions and comments had been made of the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2009.</p> <p>In addition to this RBT have advised that they have received a couple of queries from parish councils requesting specific advice about their own employees under the terms of the Joint Working Charter. However RBT have been unable to assist as they cannot commit to general advice to anyone not employed by the borough council and under the terms and conditions of RMBC.</p> <p>The group reviewed the conditions in the Charter and it was clear that advice on HR issues/employment rights etc are subject to tendering by a Parish Council or cluster of Parish Councils and that this would be made clear when the Contacts section is reviewed later in the year. Failing this members of the county Local Councils Association are able to obtain advice and this signposting will be made in the Charter.</p>	
<p><b>6. Update on the Parish Boundary Review</b></p> <p>MH advised the group that the Parish Review was progressing and that a report on the second phase of the Review was going to Cabinet on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009 prior to the final phase of consultation.</p>	<p>PG to place link to report on the website.</p>
<p><b>7. Rotherham Show</b></p> <p>PG advised the group that the initial planning phase of the</p>	

<p>Rotherham Show is about to begin and consideration needs to be given to any promotional work for parish and town councils.</p> <p>Due to the change in location (now Rosehill Park, Rawmarsh) and the reduced amount of space available the group decided to share a stall with Area Assemblies and using the material from last year utilising a budget of approx £1000. Invitations to man the stall would again be sent to all Parish and Town Councils.</p>	<p>PG to check material available and book stall.</p>
<p><b>8. Any other Business</b></p> <p><b>Scrutiny Review – Working with Parish Councils</b></p> <p>JA advised the group that Cabinet had approved the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review around Working with Parish and Town Councils. It was requested that the Action plan accompanying the Review be sent out to all parish and town councils for information.</p> <p><b>Freedom of Information Requests</b></p> <p>The group are aware that parish councils are receiving an increasing number of freedom of information requests. JA advised that a model publication scheme does exist and wondered how many Parish Councils were aware of this and had adopted the scheme and if there is consistency of approach across the Borough.</p> <p>PG advised he would contact Sarah Corbett for further advice prior to contacting all parish councils with a view to assess the need for further assistance with this issue.</p>	<p>PG to contact Sarah Corbett.</p>
<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting:</b></p> <p><b>1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 at 4.30pm, Town Hall.</b></p>	