RMBC and town and parish council
Joint Working Group
2017 to 2018

Rotherham
**Metropolitan
Borough Council**
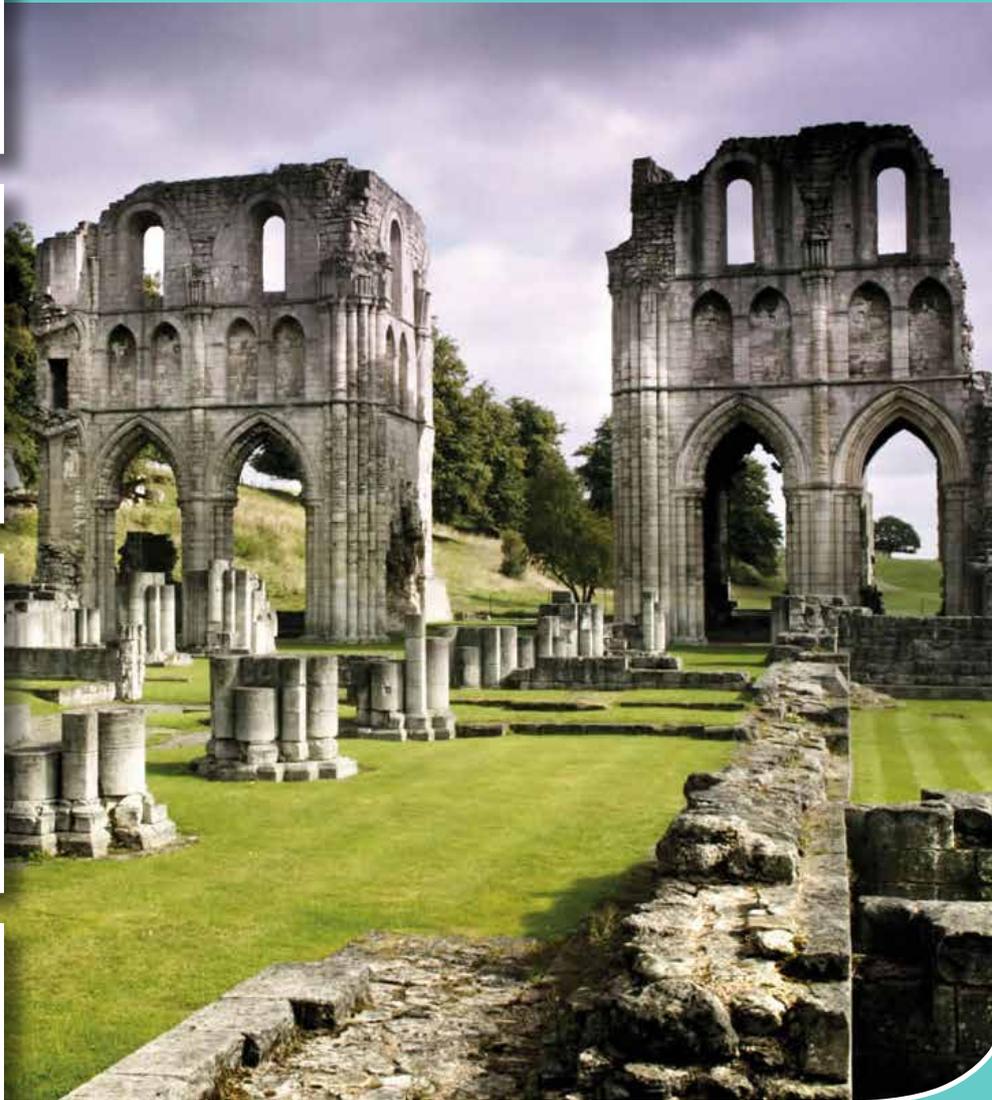
Introduction

This is an overview of work progress between the period of July 17 to June 18. For information about past work you can read the RMBC and Town and Parish Council Overview for 16/17 at www.rotherham.gov.uk

The principle consultative group between RMBC and the Town and Parish councils is the Joint Working Group. The group was originally set up in 2006 due to recognition of the benefit to both tiers of local government including: a joint working Charter; improving communications; and the offer of training and development opportunities.

For the 17/18 period the group consisted of 8 Parish Councillors, the Chairperson Councillor Yasseen, and appropriate RMBC officers. It was serviced by the Neighbourhood Partnership Team. In May 2018 Councillor Sarah Allen, Cabinet Member for Cleaner, Greener Communities, took over the role of Chairperson.

Membership of the RMBC and town and parish council working group 2016 –17

Councillor
Taiba Yasseen
Cabinet Member Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services
(since May 18 Councillor Sarah Allen Cabinet Member Cleaner, Greener

Parish Councillor
Peter Blanksby
Wales Parish Council

Parish Councillor
Richard Swann
Woodsetts Parish Council

Parish Councillor
Clive Jepson
Anston Parish Council

Parish Councillor
John Swift
Treeton Parish Council

Parish Councillor
Rachael Crehan
Thrybergh Parish Council
(since 03/18)

Parish Councillor
Peter Thirwall
Wickersley Parish Council

Parish Councillor
Dave Smith
Dinnington Town Council

Parish Councillor
Patricia Wade
Aston Parish Council

In April 2018, Clerks representation on the group resumed and meetings are attended by:

- **Kate Butler** – Clerk to Maltby Town Council
- **Caroline Havenhand** – Clerk to Laughton en le Morthen, and Harthill with Woodall Parish Councils
- **Alan Hodkin** – Clerk to Aston Parish Council

Overview July 2017 to June 2018

1. Accountability of the RMBC and Town/Parish Council Joint Working Group (JWG) and improving communication to the wider parish and town council network

The JWG has looked at a variety of ways to improve communication with the wider network of parish/town councils.

A news bulletin is now available highlighting the latest news and developments. It is circulated to all the parish and town councils on publication.

A webpage is in development and will be live this year.

We have sustained the programme of training and development sessions which is a valued way to engage and network with each other too.

We continue to identify areas of good practice with a view to adopting approaches that can potentially improve ways of working between the Joint Working Group and Parish and Town council network.

2. RMBC and Town/Parish Council Joint Working Group meetings:

The following relates to work progressed at the Joint Working Group meetings:

RMBC and Town/Parish Councils Joint Working Group Work Plan

Based upon the key themes within the Charter and to solidify the accountability of the group there is now a work plan in place. It is periodically reviewed through-out the year at JWG meetings. If you would like to view the work plan please contact us at: parish.councils@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward Boundary Review

The Head of Democratic Services, and the Partnerships and Policy Officer provided an in-depth presentation on the Ward boundary review being conducted by the Boundary Commission for England. It provided an opportunity for the group and the wider network to feed into the consultation process.

Local Planning Authority and communication with Local Councils

The Head of Planning and Building Control attended a question and answer session mainly clarifying communication processes with parish and town councils. This was primarily a catch up meeting following on from the training sessions provided by the Local Planning Authority last year.

Proposed Waste Collection

The Assistant Director for Community Safety and Street Scene provided information on the proposals for the waste collection service. The information was circulated to the Network to give Town and Parish Councils the opportunity to feed into the process.

Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy

The Head of Performance, Intelligence, and Improvement presented the draft Neighbourhoods Strategy to the group for comments and suggestions. The Thriving Neighbourhoods strategy will be circulated once complete.

Housing Growth and Strategy

The Housing Delivery Manager presented information on future housing growth for Rotherham and the strategy Rotherham Council is working to. Information from this has been circulated to the Town and Parish Council network.

Catcliffe, Orgreave, and Waverley Community Governance Review

The Assistant Director, Legal Services presented a report on how the recent Community Governance Review was conducted for Catcliffe, Orgreave, and Waverley with a view to using it as a model should other areas within the borough have an interest in setting up a local council.

3. Cabinet Member visits to Town and Parish Councils

Councillor Yasseen, accompanied by one of the Strategic Directors, has visited a number of parish councils to build relations and unpick some of the issues being experienced by them. Councillor Allen will continue with this over the coming year.

4. Focus Groups

Enviro-crime Enforcement Group – This group looked at options to employ a warden to increase enforcement capacity for littering and dog fouling in the south of the borough. However, a new RMBC Environmental Crime and Parking Enforcement Scheme was rolled out increasing the number of wardens in the area. Consequently, the group regularly met to monitor the progress of the scheme until the contract was terminated towards the end of 2017. It is envisaged that the group will re-convene when a new shared service with Doncaster starts later on this year.

Website Support (8 smaller parish councils) - Through the work of the JWG, RMBC continues to host 8 of the smaller parish councils websites so that they can communicate effectively with their communities. RMBC continues to look at ways to support other local councils with website development and is currently conducting a pilot with one council using the expertise of Rotherham College students.

5. Good Practice Visit

Members of the Joint Working Group and Rotherham Council Officers visited Milton Keynes Council to find out how they, and Central Bedfordshire Council, work with their local councils. Both authorities have developed a framework with their local councils identifying the different ways they can work together regarding service delivery. The JWG will be looking at this way of working in more detail over the coming months.

6. Town and Parish Council Network Meetings

The Town and Parish Council Network meetings have provided opportunities for parish councillors, clerks, elected members, and Council officers to meet to discuss issues. Over the past couple of years, since the advancement of the training and development programme (see section 8), the network meetings have been more focused on a key subject pertinent to Town and Parish Councils. This year the focus has been on the Regulation of the extraction of shale gas, however, a special network meeting was also organised on behalf HS2 Ltd.

o **The Regulation of the Extraction of Shale Gas:** Presentations were given by UK Onshore Oil and Gas (UKOOG), and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Following on from this, questions from the audience where taken by a panel of experts made up of representatives from UKOOG, BEIS, Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive, Gas and Oil Authority, National Planning Advisor to Society of Local Council Clerks, and the Police Liaison Team.

o **HS2:** HS2 Ltd met with Parish and Town councils to discuss the route development and discuss how they can best engage and influence the development to their advantage. HS2 Ltd continues to liaise with the affected Town and Parish Councils through a series of bi-lateral meetings.

7. Training and Development for Parish and Town Councils

Through the JWG, we have continued to provide a training and development programme over the past year for all those involved with town and parish councils. Most sessions, apart from the network meetings, have been provided by RMBC specialist services and provide a forum for learning, networking, and building relations.

The table below shows training and development that has taken place over the past year:

Date	Subject	Provider	Nos	PCs	Venue
August 17	Emergency Planning	Emergency Response Team	22	12	Todwick Village Hall
September 17	Legionella Awareness	Emergency Safety Team	6	1	Gordon Bennett
October 17	Network meeting Shale Gas extraction	Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy/UK Onshore Oil & Gas, SLCC	32	14	Todwick Village Hall
November 17	Spec Network meeting HS2 consultation	HS2 Ltd			Aston Parish Hall
January 18	Data Protection awareness	Communications and Marketing Team	11	14	Dalton Parish Hall
March 18	Fire Safety and FE training	Health and Safety Team	11	2	Winthrop Gardens
April 18	Data Protection Awareness	Communications and Marketing Team	32	16	Dalton Parish Hall
May 18	Safeguarding Children in a Community Setting	Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board	10	6	Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Thurcroft
June 18	Basic Health and Safety	Health and Safety Team			Winthrop Gardens

8. What Next

We are eagerly awaiting the launch of the new Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy which sets out a clear vision for how the Borough Council would like to work within communities over the next seven years. This is a huge opportunity for the Town and Parish Councils to play an integral part and help in the delivery of this within our Neighbourhoods'.

For further information on the work of the RMBC, Town and Parish Councils Joint Working Group please contact: parish.councils@rotherham.gov.uk