

Save Our Greenbelt – Dinnington & Anston Action Group

Report of Meeting on Friday 7 October 2100

There were two main sections to the meeting, a formal presentation followed by a question, statement and suggestion session from the floor.

The Rt Hon Kevin Baron MP, the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive of RMBC were invited but were otherwise engaged.

The presentation had 5 components:

Overview of what we have done so far:

Press

Radio

Web site

Persuaded local councillors set up a meeting to take questions from the community

Collected over 1700 letters of objection and delivered them to the Council

Sent questions to the Council

Emailed the Chief Executive to request his help in obtaining answers to our questions (28/09/11).

Problems we have faced:

Council assuming that individuals from our area were Group representatives

Delay in replying to questions raised – 3 weeks for the majority

Poor quality of answers to our questions including efficient use of the truth

Six questions together with their answers were presented in detail, highlighting the imprecise answers and the lack of any answers at all in some cases. These questions were a subset of questions we had prepared earlier for a meeting with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. The purpose of these questions and answers was to illustrate the poor response by, and reasons for lack of trust in the Borough.

Developments:

Consultation demonstrated to be ineffective – eg:

Only 1500 people attended 'drop-ins' Borough wide

At the meeting at Laughton Common Community Centre only 4 or 5 found out from Council advertising

There should be more emphasis on developing Brownfield land to reduce pressure on Greenfield sites

Lack of trust and confidence in the Council

We had a meeting scheduled for earlier in the week with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive but this was postponed because of annual leave.

What Next?

Raise awareness locally:

All public info to be posted on web site

Hold meetings when necessary

Stage charity events

Volunteers

Media coverage.

Solicit support:

Nationally – eg WI, National Trust

Locally:

Councillors

Sympathetic companies

Residents – volunteering, spreading the word, sending letters.

Letters for signing.

Agreed in principle:

The content of a letter to be sent to the Council.

Aims:

To protect Greenbelt land and other green spaces from non-essential development

To encourage development of Brownfield sites as a priority

To support the development of social and affordable housing for the residents of Rotherham Borough.

Questions, statements and suggestions from the floor.

A great deal of support came from this session. Many volunteers were recruited to join the club.

There was a feeling that the Borough had chosen the Dinnington area on which to dump 'that, which wouldn't be tolerated elsewhere in the Borough'.

Again, the issue of the of the 'consultation process' was ridiculed, particularly as only 1500 residents, Borough-wide, attended the drop-in sessions. The letter to be sent to the Council was revised to reflect this feeling.

There were two Ward Councillors present on the 'floor' who came under the 'cosh' occasionally, in the main, from Parish Councillors. Perhaps more importantly, the question of 'why aren't the other Ward Councillors from Dinnington and Anston in attendance 'was raised?

Being at the fringe of the Borough, it was voiced that residents paid taxes and had nothing in return from the Borough except waste collection. The bus service was considered very poor yet better than the condition of the roads.

Many in the hall identified with the town of Worksop as opposed to Rotherham.

As Dinnington has town status, there was a call for Dinnington and surrounding villages to become independent of Rotherham Borough raise its own taxes, outsource services (eg road maintenance) to local councils and companies.

What started as a presentation to urge the preservation of the Greenbelt and build on Brownfield sites was developed by the 'floor' into a discussion of the wide-ranging failure of RMBC in respect of the welfare of Dinnington and the surrounding area.