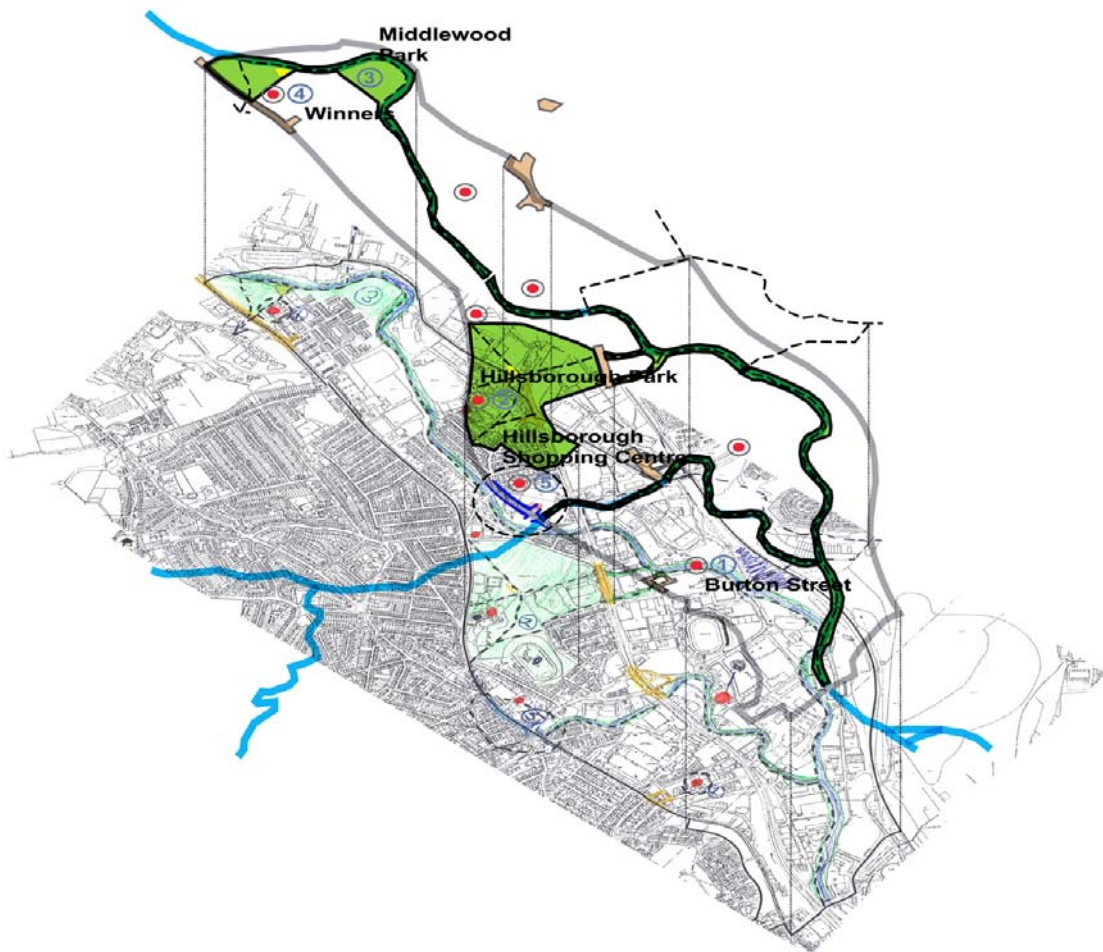


# HILLSBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY



## SOUTHEY OWLERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGIES VOLUME 2 JUNE 2003

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## INTRODUCTION

The area described in this report is the strip of Hillsborough that lies within the Southey and Owlerton Area Regeneration boundaries. In this document the neighbourhood will be referred to as the SOAR Hillsborough Neighbourhood or 'Hillsborough'.

The SOAR Hillsborough Neighbourhood is very different to the other neighbourhoods. It stretches along the River Don Valley and is not part of the inter-war housing estate that covers the majority of the Southey and Owlerton area. It consists of isolated pockets of housing, mainly private, in amongst industry and leisure facilities. It is also a place that people from across the city (and the country) come to shop, work, socialise, use the leisure facilities and cheer on their local football clubs.

The SRB5 boundary (an artificial boundary drawn up for the Single Regeneration Budget funding bid) rather than real boundaries on the ground defined the neighbourhood. This led to much discussion on the validity of developing a strategy for the 'neighbourhood' that was not linked to the wider Hillsborough area. It also proved difficult at the beginning of the process to involve local residents - at the start many of those involved were local to Hillsborough and yet lived just on the other side of the road, outside the SRB5 boundaries.

A lot of work has been undertaken on the Winn Gardens estate by a local group called Winners. They have a very clear plan of action and have recently successfully bid for two major projects through SOAR/ SRB5 – a youthwork project and refurbishment of the pavilion as a nursery and community space. One of the questions throughout the strategy is how the estate can or needs to link to the rest of the area.

The issues in this neighbourhood more so than others led to detailed discussions of the consultation methods to ensure the widest range of people would be consulted. The group whilst remaining small has worked hard to ensure the methods used are right for the area and to bring in others to the group.

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## **Hillsborough**

“The SOAR Hillsborough Neighbourhood stretches along the River Don Valley from close to the inner city to the countryside looking up to the dramatic ridges of Foxhill Backedge and Parkwood Springs. It consists of isolated pockets of housing in amongst industry and leisure facilities and is the most urban of the neighbourhoods. The Hillsborough Neighbourhood’s busy shopping centre and industries contrasts with the quiet backwaters of the housing”



The Walkabout

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## THE PROCESS SO FAR

A small group of people working within the SOAR Hillsborough Neighbourhood met in September 2001 to start looking at how to take forward the strategy in the area. It was recognised that the nature of the area - isolated pockets of housing, few groups that represented the residents within the area - meant that the process would need to be particularly tailored to this neighbourhood. It was felt that the first step to begin to identify issues in the area was to hold a walkabout involving local groups and residents. It was agreed that we should focus initially on the residential areas to discover what it was like to live there before tackling the industrial corridor. A further small meeting was held to plan the day and to draw up a list of invitees, acknowledging that word of mouth would be effective in bringing people into the process.

A group of local residents and workers hosted the walkabout (and mini-bus-about) in October 2001. This introduced the Council officers and independent advisors to the housing and shopping areas and began discussions between local groups on joint issues that they could work together on, such as childcare.

It became clear that whereas in other neighbourhoods it had been possible to identify a site for a big event that would attract people from across the neighbourhood this was unlikely to work in Hillsborough. Events in Hillsborough Park attract a citywide audience and the smaller pieces of land were very hidden and local to their vicinity. The group was very keen to ensure that the consultation methods used would reach all the isolated pockets of housing and requested Eventus to work with them in designing the research.

The impressions from the walkabout were fed back to a meeting in January 2002 and a discussion followed that resulted in an agreed plan of how to reach the residents of the area. At this point it was agreed to change the name of the neighbourhood from Owlerton to 'Hillsborough' as it was felt that people would find this name easier to engage with.

The planned activities (see below) took place over the summer of 2002 and, despite some very unseasonable weather (torrential wind and rain which washed out one of the events), the response was fantastic. So much information was recorded that two meetings and much reading in between were needed analyse all the information and bring out some recommendations.



### The consultation

Three focuses were identified where activities could take place: Burton Street, Hillsborough Park and Winn Gardens and the group, with Eventus, agreed a three-pronged approach to the consultation:

1. A questionnaire/ family game that went to every household, with every response entered to a prize draw to encourage returns
2. A mobile event that built on the questionnaire at specific sites in the neighbourhood – later known as 'Changing Places' with our very own Carol Smiley look alike
3. A larger event at Hillsborough Gala testing out ideas with residents and people who use and visit the area.

The questionnaire asked:

- What I really like about where I live is.....
- What I really dislike about where I live is.....
- Here are 3 things that I think would improve the quality of life for me in the area.
- Please tell us about any other issues or concerns that you would like to see addressed

In addition:

- There was a specific section for young people within the households to fill in what they would like to see in their area.
- People were also asked to fill in some details on their family background

The 'Changing Hillsboro' event took place over 2 days in early July 2002. The first event transformed a corner of the Ball Inn Car park, Bradfield Road with colourful ribbons, flowers and fabric. It was noted on the responses to the questions if people were residents or visitors to the area. As people stopped to watch the show they were asked:

- What is it like to live on your street?
- What would you like to change about the area?
- What are the local issues that most affect you?
- What do you feel is special about Hillsborough?

On the second day the weather made the transformation impossible but the team visited the shopping centre and other venues to gain people's ideas.

The event at the Hillsborough Gala focused on specific hotspots in terms of traffic, parking or places that needed tidying up. People were asked to mark on a large plan of 'Hillsborough':

- Three places which they see as 'hotspots'
- Say why they have chosen these places
- Give any thoughts and ideas on how they could be improved

People were also asked to mark where they lived on aerial photographs and were asked:

- What are the local issues that affect you?
- What could help to improve things?







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## KEY ELEMENTS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY FOR HILLSBOROUGH

### Impressions of the place

General impressions about 'Hillsborough' that have emerged from conversations over the last few months are:

- People love living here – both because of the facilities on offer but also for the feeling of community and the closeness of family and friends
- The area has very good connections to the rest of the city with very good transport links through Supertram and buses.
- There is a mix of housing from Victorian terraces, the 60's estate of Winn Gardens, the imposing 1930's Regent Street Court flats and the more recent in fill sites.
- There are three main pockets of housing – around Burton Street, around the park and Leppings Lane (both of these mainly private) and Winn Gardens (a self contained council estate)
- The neighbourhood stretches along the river valley and is sandwiched between the river valley and Hillsborough, linking more closely with the surrounding housing outside the SOAR area rather than the estate on top of the hill.
- Two rivers, River Don and River Loxley, run through the area
- The churches and many community groups are active in the area and play an important part in community life
- Many people see the area as a vibrant town centre with good quality shops and leisure facilities. This range of facilities is important to the residents; however there is a feeling that some are becoming run down
- The numbers of fast food outlets, pubs and traffic has a big effect on the neighbourhood in terms of litter, noise and pollution. These issues were raised time and again throughout the consultation
- The park plays an important part in people's lives and is seen as a major asset to the neighbourhood
- The area is close to the countryside and the neighbourhood forms a link between the city, the rest of the SOAR area and the countryside
- The use of the area by others leads to traffic and parking being a big issue in the area



Neighbourhood Strategy Diagram for Hillsborough

### The diagram

Rather than trying to map all of the issues and activities the framework diagram for each of the six neighbourhoods in Southey Owlerton identifies priorities for action. Each of the six diagrams has a standard key or checklist so that when they are pieced together they will form a coherent framework.

What has emerged in terms of a physical plan for 'Hillsborough' is:

- The development of existing community facilities for all ages
- The improvement of the shopping centre
- The importance of Hillsborough corner and need to define more clearly the junction as an entrance to Hillsborough.
- The entrance to the neighbourhood and Sheffield on Middlewood Road at Winn Gardens
- The need to tackle traffic and safety issues
- The need for investment in the two parks, Hillsborough and Middlewood, that will build on their natural qualities and develop the buildings and other facilities within them
- The potential linkages between the parks and the river corridor – via the Leisure Centre at Hillsborough

The diagram shows the key buildings and open spaces that have potential for **community use**. There are three parts of the neighbourhood that local people felt were focal points: Hillsborough Park and the shopping centre, Winn Gardens and Burton Street. Links between these need strengthening including physical links with the Hillsborough Tabernacle. At the first two focal points the community facilities link up with other facilities such as the parks and shops, however Burton Street is isolated and not very visible. Ways of linking this centre better to the wider community through streetscene improvements and footpath links needs to be explored.

All those living and visiting Hillsborough appreciate the range of shops and facilities, although some of the shops are empty and bring the image of the centre down. The importance of the Hillsborough centre needs to be built on to **improve the shopping facilities** and strengthen the area as the 'town centre' for the surrounding neighbourhood.

**Streetscene improvements** are proposed at a number of places

- Hillsborough Corner
- The entrance to the neighbourhood on Middlewood Road at Winn Gardens
- At the junction of Burton Street and Langsett Road
- On Penistone Road at the junction with Livesey Street at the siting of the new Sheffield College
- Across Penistone Road linking up Hillsborough Park and the Leisure Centre
- The Herries Road Roundabout and entrance to Claywheels Lane

These improvements will together highlight the main facilities. The Langsett Road/ Middlewood Road spine is the more local route, with Penistone Road being a major route in and out of the City. The streetscene improvements should reflect these different characteristics.



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Questions concerning traffic hotspots at the Hillsborough Gala identified where **road safety** improvements are needed. In particular people requested solutions to parking problems. There were a number of specific sites where people felt the need for additional restrictions and clarity;

- in particular Hillsborough Corner continues to cause concern and confusion. Residents and non-residents alike are wanting clarity and a final solution to the issues;
- everyone who returned a questionnaire said that residents parking zones would improve their quality of life.

The importance of the **Parks and open spaces** came across very strongly and the wish for the green space within the neighbourhood to be strengthened, linked and improved. At present the rivers provide ribbons of greenery that run through the neighbourhood but are inaccessible. The diagram shows the potential of the river corridors to link up the open spaces in the area, provided they could be made more accessible.





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## Identity

Hillsborough's physical identity is based on its lying in the Upper Don valley, its mix of housing, its position between Hillsborough and the river and the proximity to the industrial and leisure facilities.

Many people described the area as a small town or village with a vibrant and bustling shopping centre and peaceful havens within the housing areas.

The neighbourhood feels very much on the edge, lying between Hillsborough and rest of the SOAR area. It falls into under a different housing office, youth service provision and within a different Primary Care Trust boundary and consists of pockets of deprivation in a relatively affluent area.

The neighbourhood lies in the valley below the ridges of Shirecliffe and Foxhill looking up to the estate. It stretches from close to the City centre out to the countryside and provides a link between the city and the rest of the SOAR area. At present this link is through the road link along Penistone Road; the development of a riverside walk would also provide a pedestrian route with links to the ridge and Tongue Gutter walks in Parson Cross. The river provides a ribbon of greenery that winds through the neighbourhood from the very urban southern tip at Neepsend to the more rural setting of Winn Gardens. This asset needs to be built upon and access to the rivers opened up.



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### **The Bigger Picture**

In the main Neighbourhood Strategies report (Volume 1) we describe a number of “big ideas” and development principles that together could establish a positive identity for the Southey Owlerton area. At the next stage of developing design briefs for individual projects, it will be important to reflect these ideas and principles. We will also be developing Volume 2 of the report covering the Upper Don and SOAR Hillsborough Neighbourhood, which may pull out additional qualities for this area. The list below will need to be modified following the production of Volume 2.

The relevance of these ‘big ideas’ for the SOAR Hillsborough Neighbourhood is as follows:

- There are two key open spaces in the neighbourhood Hillsborough Park and Middlewood Park. These link or have the potential to link to many of the key community facilities in the area however they do not connect with each other. There is potential for the footpath link along the River Don to link the parks in this neighbourhood. (*Park city*)
- The route can be kept special by enhancing the sheltered, naturalistic character of the river valley whilst opening up a series of glimpses and views up to the ridges of the estate and out to the countryside. (*See and be Seen and Identity from landform*)
- The footpath link along the River Don will provide a real connection between the city centre, through the neighbourhood to the countryside. (*From city to country and back again*)
- A footpath link along the River Don and the River Loxley would link up the Parks, other green spaces, pockets of housing and facilities within the neighbourhood and give the sense of a green infrastructure to everyday life that could become a hallmark of this part of the city. (*Green arteries*)

The demonstration projects should reflect the new identity for Southey Owlerton whilst recognising the more urban nature of the area. This section will be developed following the production of Volume 2 of the Regeneration Framework Report.



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## **PROJECTS THE COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO TAKE FORWARD**

The priorities that local people have identified are set out below.

### **We need a worker to develop the town centre. We want to work with the businesses, the Council and the Police to improve the Town Centre**

The importance of the town centre came out very strongly in the consultation. It is seen by most as a real asset to the area, however some of the shops are empty and some of the sites are looking run down. The noise and litter caused by the pubs and take-aways cause real problems for residents and the need for additional Police patrols was raised through the questionnaires. The group would like to work with the Area Panel, Police and local businesses on how best to develop and manage the Town Centre. It is felt that the employment of a Town Centre Manager would move this forward. A sum of money has been identified through the SRB5 Programme Review and the group needs to explore further funding opportunities to match this and how this can link to the Hillsborough Park Team.

### **We need a worker to link groups within the Netherthorpe, Hillsborough and Walkley Area Panel**

There is also wish to develop a network of Priority 4 communities that lie across the Hillsborough, Netherthorpe and Walkley Area Panel. These tend to be isolated pockets of deprivation in otherwise affluent areas. A worker and/or funds are needed to undertake some feasibility work into drawing up a plan covering these neighbourhoods.

### **We need to tackle the traffic and parking issues**

Hillsborough is criss-crossed with major roads that are access routes for the rest of the city, the shopping centre pulls in customers from a wide area and the leisure facilities particularly the football ground and events in Hillsborough Park pull enormous crowds. This has led to many residents feeling swamped by the influx of people at specific times and the consultation pulled out many detailed comments and potential solutions for sites in need of parking restrictions and traffic calming measures.

The group would like to work with the Council on tackling these issues and on the practicalities of resident parking zones.

### **We need to work with the Council and businesses to improve the maintenance of the neighbourhood**

The use of the neighbourhood by such large numbers means that the area can look rundown and dirty. There is need to develop ways of better maintaining the street, verges and public spaces in the neighbourhood.







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**We want to link the neighbourhood together through green routes**

There is need for better maintenance of the existing greenery and extending the green framework to help combat and disguise the levels of traffic passing through each day. Opening up the rivers and linking them with the open spaces will help bring a backdrop of greenery into the area.

**We would like to develop childcare and other services across the area**

There is a need for improved services for young people in the area and particularly childcare services. There is a shortage across the area from pre-school to a lack of places in the local primary schools. The need for services for older people was also raised. The local groups such as Burton Street, Hillsborough Tabernacle, Winners, Hillsborough Community Development Trust etc would like to work together to develop these services.

**We would like to see Hillsborough Park developed as a central asset for the neighbourhood and wider community**

Hillsborough Park is the centre of the Hillsborough Neighbourhood. The Hillsborough Park Regeneration Project is working on the redevelopment of the park developing a masterplan for improvements and increasing community activity through events, festivals and arts projects. The park will continue to be a focus for the regeneration activity in the Hillsborough area.

**Middlewood Park and Pavilion**

Middlewood Winners have received funding to refurbish and extend the pavilion in Middlewood Park, work is due to start June 2003. The priorities of the local residents are consistently identified as affordable childcare facilities and positive activities for the local youngsters. The development of the pavilion will therefore focus on the creation of a neighbourhood nursery, youth centre and IT training facilities. It will also act as a focus for other activities, such as sport & leisure, health & wellbeing, advice services etc.



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## NEXT STEPS

We believe that the priorities for the next twelve months in the 'Hillsborough' Neighbourhood Strategy process are:

**1. Decide how the neighbourhood group will operate and the role of the workers to support them and the implementation of the strategy**

At present the neighbourhood group is an informal group of groups. Community elections to the SOAR Board and its theme groups will mean that up to seven neighbourhood representatives will need a defined group to belong to and report back to. A decision is needed about whether to formalise the neighbourhood group in some way.

In addition there is no dedicated worker to take forward the strategy. The particular need for a Town Centre Manager has been identified. Some funding has been ring-fenced through the SOAR Programme Review for a worker to support the implementation of the strategy and the group now needs to agree the role and remit of the project, identify match funding and how it will direct the work.

**2. Continue to talk to the Council about traffic and parking issues**

The consultation identified very site-specific parking and traffic issues. The group would like to share these findings with the Council and investigate how these can be tackled. In particular

- Hillsborough Corner
- Resident parking zones

**3. Work with the local businesses, the Council and the Police on better management the neighbourhood**

The success of the shopping centre and the number of take-aways and pubs lead to disturbance of the residents through noise, litter and concern about going out at night. Local people would like to explore ways of managing the neighbourhood more effectively to minimise the effects of these facilities on the neighbourhood.

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**4. Work with other neighbourhoods in the wider area to develop a network a plan for the north West of the City**

The northwest is characterised by small pockets of deprivation within an otherwise wealthy suburb. This leads to problems in deprivation of these areas being masked by the affluence of the wider communities. The group would like to work with the Area Panel on how a network of communities in these poorer areas could be formed and a plan developed to help them. By working together they hope to create a stronger voice within these neighbourhoods.

**5. Continue to support the development of the masterplans for the two parks**

The parks are a key asset to the neighbourhood and local people would like to support the development and implementation of the plans.

**6. Explore the feasibility of the footpath routes along the rivers.**

At present the rivers are very inaccessible as they wind through the neighbourhood. The feasibility of opening them up and creating a footpath link along them needs to be explored.

**7. Engage in the development of Neighbourhood Strategies Volume 2**