

COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, 18th April, 2012

Present:- The Mayor (Councillor Wright) (in the Chair); Councillors Akhtar, Ali, Andrews, Atkin, Barron, Beaumont, Beck, Blair, Buckley, Currie, Dalton, Dodson, Donaldson, Doyle, Ellis, Falvey, Fenoughty, Foden, Gilding, Goulty, J. Hamilton, N. Hamilton, Havenhand, Hughes, Hussain, Jack, Kaye, Kirk, Lakin, License, Mannion, McNeely, Middleton, Nightingale, Parker, Pickering, Pitchley, Read, Roddison, G. A. Russell, R. S. Russell, Sangster, Sharman, Sims, Smith, Steele, Stone, Swift, Turner, Tweed, Walker, Whelbourn, Whysall, Wootton and Wyatt.

A99 PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

The Mayor was pleased to present the following:-

- Certificates of Achievement to Councillors Alan Buckley, Hilda Jack, Barry Kaye, Lyndsay Pitchley, Ann Russell, John Swift and Ken Wyatt for attending and completing an Emergency Life Support course.

The Deputy Leader was invited to present the Annual Employee Recognition Awards, previously known as the HEART Awards, which have recently been re-launched as The Employee Recognition Awards, based around Business Values - "The Way We Do Business" to:-

- Employee of the Year Award - Ann Knight from Neighbourhoods and Adult Services.
- Team of the Year Award 2011 - Theatre Services Team.
- Manager of the Year Award 2011 - Mark Ford from Neighbourhoods and Adult Services.

Congratulations were offered to all those involved in gaining these awards.

A100 COUNCIL MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 7th March, 2012 be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover:- Councillor Stone

Seconder:- Councillor Akhtar

A101 COMMUNICATIONS

(1) The Chief Executive submitted the following petitions which had been referred to the appropriate Directorate for consideration:-

- From three hundred and thirty nine residents of Orgreave and Aston opposing the plans of RMBC to cease the free travel/bus service for the children of Orgreave (serving both Aston Fence Junior and Infant School and Aston Academy).

(2) The Chief Executive submitted apologies for absence from Councillors Burton, Gosling, Rushforth and P. A. Russell.

A102 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public pointed out that in addition to the Government's £831 million they were to provide an additional £3 billion for road repair and asked as a Board Member of a Chinese Corporation "Business Europe China Okliengellschast" would the Leader confirm/dispel "Chinese Whispers" that the work in Rotherham would be undertaken by a company with Chinese connections?

The Leader reported that no company with Chinese connections would be carrying out highways maintenance works in Rotherham.

The supplementary question asked by the member of the public was ruled out of Order by the Mayor.

A103 STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee (Section B) (pages 20B to 23B) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Buckley

Seconder:- Councillor Gilding

A104 CABINET MINUTES

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet (Section C) (pages 114C to 132C) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Stone

Seconder:- Councillor Akhtar

A105 DELEGATED POWERS MEETINGS

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of Cabinet Members as listed below be adopted:-

- Safeguarding Children and Adults – Pages 35D to 37D (Section D).
- Community Development, Equality and Young Peoples Issues – Pages 46E to 49E (Section E).
- Lifelong Learning and Culture – Pages 39F to 45F (Section F).
- Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity – Pages 78G to 90G (Section G).
- Adult Social Care – Pages 51H to 54H (Section H).
- Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods – Pages 43J to 47J (Section J).
- Health and Wellbeing – Pages 44K to 47K (Section K).
- Waste and Emergency Planning – Pages 27L to 34L (Section L).

- Deputy Leader and Organisational Change and Governance – Pages 15N to 16N (Section N).

Mover:- Councillor Stone

Seconder:- Councillor Akhtar

A106 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee (Section P) (pages 34P to 36P) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Sangster

Seconder:- Councillor Kaye

A107 LICENSING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Board (Section Q) (pages 25Q to 29Q) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Wootton

Seconder:- Councillor Barron

A108 HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board (Section S) (pages 32S to 41S) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Seconder:- Councillor Doyle

A109 PLANNING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Planning Board (Section T) (pages 83T to 88T) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Pickering

Seconder:- Councillor Dodson

A110 QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

(1) Councillor Middleton asked did the Council have a policy on the unlawful creation, in local publically accessed woods, of artificial 'jumps' for bicycles or motor-bikes, which disfigured the landscape and, in the case of Canklow Wood and also Gulling Wood, which could destroy prehistoric remains?

The Leader confirmed there was no formal policy for this specific issue. However, custom and practice was that whenever a report was received of such activity then the site in question would be inspected and any necessary action would be taken, including the following:-

- Removing the jumps and other unauthorised works as soon as possible (normally within two weeks).
- Checking for signs of forced entry by motorbikes (e.g. broken fences) and undertaking repairs as necessary.
- Requesting an off-road motor-vehicle 'sting' operation to tackle persistent unauthorised access by motorbikes.

Unfortunately, given the extent of the Council's woodland estate it was not possible to have a regular staff presence throughout and the Council depended on reports of such activity from members of the public.

(2) Pursuant to an answer received at a previous Council Meeting Councillor Turner asked what was now the valuation placed on the Riverside Offices?

Councillor Smith reported that establishing the Asset Value of Riverside House, on the Council's Register of Assets, was being carried out as part of the 2011/12 accounts closure process and once the figure was confirmed then arrangements would be made for Councillor Turner to be sent the figure (this should be around the 15th May, 2012).

(3) Councillor Turner asked what was the Chief Executive's job description, was it to serve and also direct all parties in this Chamber ensuring a democratic model was adhered to, or was he simply an arm of the Labour Party?

The Leader confirmed the Chief Executive to be the Head of the Council's Paid Service and who occupied a politically restricted post.

All employees of the Council whether or not politically restricted must follow every lawful expressed policy of the Council and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

A key duty was to advise the Council, its executive and its committees on all matters of general policy and all other matters upon which his advice was necessary, with the right attendance at all committees of the Council and all sub-committees and working parties.

The Chief Executive shall not be required to advise any political group of the Council, either as to the work of the group or as to the work of the Council, neither shall he be required to attend any meetings of any political group.

(4) Councillor Turner asked was it reasonable to surmise that new or potential Councillors for the Labour Party may either become or already be employed by adjacent Labour dominated Authorities?

The Leader reported this not to be the case.

A111 QUESTIONS TO SPOKESPERSONS

(1) Councillor Gilding asked could the Police Authority Spokesperson please update Members on the Chief Constable's proposals to replace warranted Police Constables on beat patrols, with Community Support Officers?

Councillor Sharman confirmed that the Review of Neighbourhood Policing had been on-going in one form or another for the last three years.

The key findings of the Review were:-

- Some boundary realignments were required to improve alignment with partners – in particular Local Authorities.

- Police Constables on Safer Neighbourhood Teams could be better utilised and make better use of their warranted powers and problem-solving abilities if they were 'freed up' from the local beats and were tasked individually or as a team by the Safer Neighbourhood Team Sergeant.
- Police Community Support Officers would move to being Local Beat Officers, becoming responsible for a beat, or a number of beats, as the named first line of contact for local communities

At the Police Authority meeting held on Friday, 13th April, 2012 the Force reassured Members that in discussions taking place around Police Community Support Officer powers and duties would not result in a removal of Police Constables from frontline policing and that reports suggesting that this would result in less Police Officers on the beat were inaccurate – Police Officers would remain visible in the community to work in the same areas that they did now.

Police Community Support Officers would continue their valuable role working alongside Police Officers and Special Constables in Safer Neighbourhood Teams working in communities as they always have done. The Force was proposing that they would enhance their powers so that they could deal with more incidents that did not require a Police Constable with the powers of arrest.

The Police Authority agreed to review the new structure in September and in the meantime would continue to invite views and feedback from the public.

(2) Councillor Gilding asked would the Chief Constable's plans need the backing of the new Police Commissioner?

Councillor Sharman reported the Chief Constable had operational independence as set out in The Protocol. This was an important document which set out to Elected Policing Bodies, Chief Police Officers and Police and Crime Panels how their functions would be exercised in relation to each other.

However, it was envisioned that the Chief Constable would want to work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to continue to provide an efficient and effective Police Service.

(3) Councillor Gilding was the Police Authority Spokesperson in favour of these proposals?

Councillor Sharman was unable to comment.

(4) Councillor Middleton asked given the recent publicity on the withdrawal of warranted Police Officers from street patrols, could the designated Member inform Members of the number of warranted officers in Rotherham who regularly walked their beat before this announcement?

Councillor Sharman confirmed that the same number of Neighbourhood Police Officers would continue to work on beats in Rotherham as there were before this announcement. Police Community Support Officers would perform the function of Local Beat Officers, servicing community meetings and providing a point of contact, whilst Police Officers would be used on the same beats to

conduct enforcement activity using their warranted powers to address problems identified and highlighted by their communities. They have retained all their existing staff within their Safer Neighbourhood Areas and were retaining their existing Safer Neighbourhood Areas and Safer Neighbourhood Team boundaries. The three Central Safer Neighbourhood Teams were to co-locate into Main Street Police Station (closing the bases at Kimberworth and Wharnccliffe Flats), saving costs and increasing co-ordination and 'taskability' of resources.

A112 VOTE OF THANKS

The Mayor paid tribute to Councillors Fenoughty, Kirk, Nightingale, Hodgkiss and Walker who were not standing in the forthcoming election and thanked them, on behalf of the Council, for the work they had undertaken during their terms of office.

Other Members also paid tribute to those who were retiring.

Best wishes were also offered to those standing in the forthcoming election.