

**COUNCIL MEETING  
8th March, 2017**

Present:- The Mayor (Councillor Lyndsay Pitchley) (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Albiston, Allen, Andrews, Beaumont, Beck, Bird, Brookes, Carter, Clark, Cooksey, Cusworth, Cutts, Elliot, M. Elliott, R. Elliott, Ellis, Fenwick-Green, Hoddinott, Ireland, Jarvis, Jepson, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Mallinder, Marles, Marriott, Napper, Read, Reeder, Roche, Rushforth, Russell, Sansome, Senior, Sheppard, Short, Steele, Taylor, Julie Turner, Tweed, Vjestica, Walsh, Watson, Williams, Wilson, Whysall, Wyatt and Yasseen.

**124. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor was delighted to present Nicola Ford and Caroline Ramsden with certificates of commendation by the Presiding Judge following their evidence in a recent CSE trial.

Members of the Council joined the Mayor in showing their appreciation in a round of applause.

The Mayor also welcomed newly elected Councillors Carter and Vjestica to their first Council meeting.

The Mayor on International Women's Day reported on her activities since the last Council meeting, which included attending eighty one engagements with a further one this evening.

Over the past six weeks, the Mayor had visited nursing homes and schools and hosted visits to the Town Hall including cubs and scouts. There had also been a charity night at the Trades Club which also involved the Mayor singing. There had been a number of highlights since the last Council meeting which included celebrating Chinese new year, visiting the food bank, visiting 218 squadron drill team who had had the U.K.'s foot drill competition, the opening of a new shop in the town centre - Jaded Heart and attending the real ale festival at Magna.

The Leader confirmed he had no further announcements when invited by the Mayor.

**125. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allcock, Atkin, Buckley, Cowles, D. Cutts, Hague, Price, Simpson and John Turner.

**126. PETITIONS**

The Mayor reported that two petitions had been submitted, but had not met the threshold for consideration by Council, and would be referred to the relevant directorate for a response to be prepared. The petitions were:-

- From 67 residents regarding road safety on Warren Vale Road, Swinton asking the Council and the Police to investigate and take action on concerns.
- From 15 residents requesting the Council to install measures to prevent parking on the blocked paved pavement on Rectory Gardens, Todwick.

Councillor Sansome, having received the petition from residents on Warren Vale Road, urged the Council and the Police to undertake a study of this section of highway and to take any action necessary.

Councillor Sansome had also circulated consultation documentation regarding Children's Anaesthesia and stressed the importance of sharing with residents' the proposals and the need to respond.

**127. COMMUNICATIONS**

**128. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Declarations of Interest were received:-

**Minute No. 137 (Notice of Motion – Save Rotherham Post Office)**

Councillor Tweed declared a personal interest on the basis that he was employed by Royal Mail, but in an entirely separate entity.

**Minute No. 149 (Questions to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen)**

Councillor Cusworth declared a personal interest on the grounds that she was asking a question of a Cabinet Member, but was also a Governor at Brookfield Academy, the subject of her question.

**129. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING**

**Resolved:-** That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

**130. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

(1) Mr. D. Smith, on International Women's Day, wished to offer his congratulations to the Mayor in the manner in which she had represented this town over the past year. In relation to his question he asked with the amount of houses built in Dinnington over the last ten years why was it that RMBC have only collected just under £24,000 from one developer.

Councillor Lelliott explained the residential developments that had taken place in Dinnington generally provided for affordable housing on sites that did not generate additional Section 106 contributions. However, £55,000 including the £24,000 referred to by Mr. Smith had been received for public transport initiatives.

In a supplementary question Mr. Smith referred to nearly £200,000 being received over the years in Section 106 monies in Dinnington. Very little, if any, had been spent on Dinnington's infrastructure. He was also in receipt of a letter which indicated the Council did not have to consider the opinions of the Town Council. Bearing this in mind having spent £87,000 of Section 106 monies on travel passes just imagine what £87,000 could be spent on. Taking this in to account how could you expect a Parish Council in Rotherham to trust the Council to run the Community Infrastructure Levy and deal with it properly.

Councillor Lelliott explained the Council could only work with the figures provided. However, officers had been asked to provide a full answer in writing to Mr. Smith and the Cabinet Member offered to have a meeting after Council to go through this in more detail. Different developments depend on Government legislation and whether or not Section 106 contributions could be triggered as to the viability of the development sites. Some money had been used for sustainable transport initiatives and a full answer in writing could be provided on this. The Community Infrastructure Levy policy had been approved by Council and once the Town Council received their 25% they would appreciate how efficient and open and transparent you had to be to spend Government monies.

(2) Mr. P. Thirlwall firstly wished to thank the Chief Executive for including on the Mayor's letter the motions appearing on the agenda and how easier it was in the public gallery to follow the debate, secondly reminded the Leader he was still awaiting a response from him and Councillor Lelliott on how CIL money was intended to be spent and whether it could be used on reversing the disastrous Bramley traffic system and thirdly, Councillor Watson indicated some time ago that he was looking at revising Standing Orders, but if not completed yet could consideration be given to looking at the 50 word limit for questions from members of the public.

He referred to the basic annual allowance claimed by Councillors which was £11,605. As the UKIP Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Cowles claimed a further £8,717.

He asked could the Leader explain what extra duties Councillor Cowles performed to warrant claiming the extra allowance and what benefits were received by the Tax Payers of Rotherham?

The Leader was conscious Mr. Thirlwall was still waiting for a letter from himself and Councillor Lelliott on Bramley. On the issue on a review of Standing Orders this was being considered by the Constitution Working

Group. The basic allowance and special responsibility allowances, where applicable, including the Leader of the Opposition, were considered by an Independent Remuneration Panel and then approved by full Council.

There was no role description defined within the Council's Constitution covering the additional duties received by the Leader of the Opposition. As well as leading the major Opposition Group, Councillor Cowles was also the Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and sat on the Joint Improvement Board with Commissioners.

In a supplementary question Mr. Thirlwall pointed out the difficulty for the opposition to achieve anything as they did not have a whip, which meant no control. As a responsible opposition party Mr. Thirlwall thought an alternative budget would be submitted. If no alternative budget then this was remiss of the party and may have been one of the reasons for the Leader of the Opposition special responsibility. Whilst it might be they say no notice would be taken of their budget as they would not win the vote, but when he himself was an Independent Member, Mr. Thirlwall had submitted an alternative budget, which whilst lost to the vote, saw the contents he had suggested implemented in the following year.

The Leader was not sure what the Opposition would present today, but the people of Rotherham had the right to elect who they wanted to represent them.

(3) Mr. J. Jackson asked did the Council accept, that directly due to their own agreed/voted budget setting, that it had/was, implementing and operating a harmful council tax policy that removed JSA benefit from homeowners and not rental JSA claimants, thus forcing a situation where such groups were required to use charity food banks?

The Leader explained Mr. Jackson had asked a similar question at Cabinet a few weeks ago. He clarified the award of JSA (Job Seekers Allowance) made by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in accordance with their rules and would not be affected in any way by the Council's Budget and Council Tax setting or its local Council Tax Support scheme.

The question was in relation to the raising of Council Tax and the level of support and whether this impacted on home owners differently to those who rented those properties. On checking it did not matter if you were a home owner or rented a property, unless you owned more than one property and the capital meant you were expected to pay more council tax.

The Leader was acutely aware of the impact of council tax rises on people on low incomes and was why the Council had maintained a relatively generous system of council tax support. For three quarters of residents across the country the impact of council tax rises would be greater for

people who received council tax support. The proposals before Council today maintained the level of support.

In a supplementary question Mr. Jackson referred to the Mayor's good work in the borough and was delighted to see in the newspaper a recent event she had attended to raise money for a charity food bank. What was the point of the Mayor raising money for a charity food bank when the Council was removing it and forcing people to go to the food banks due to income shortages.

The Leader understood the question, but explained the proposal to be presented today meant for the average council tax payer (54%) of the borough they would pay an extra 85p a week whereas people in receipt of council tax support this figure dropped to 8p per week. 8p for some people was still a lot of money, but for some people this was lower more than was available than in some places in the country.

The Leader explained if he could he would change the Government system or revert back to the previous system giving full council tax benefit to those on very low or no incomes, but under the present budget situation the current support scheme would be maintained.

(4) Mr. R. Beecher confirmed he was a firefighter with seventeen years' experience, the last fourteen of which had been served here in Rotherham on Fitzwilliam Road as part of Green Watch.

He referred his question to the Leader of Rotherham Council and asked if he was aware of the Fire Authority's latest proposal to significantly reduce fire cover at night time here in Rotherham by removing the second appliance and the time scale for the implementation of such cuts.

The Leader thanked Mr. Beecher for his service to the people of Rotherham which was greatly appreciated. He was aware of the Fire Authority's proposals to reduce staffing numbers around the second Rotherham appliance, which was part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan which was coming to an end and consulted upon five years ago. This formed part of the implementation of that plan covering the period up to 2017.

In a supplementary question Mr. Beecher referred to the Integrated Risk Management Plan and it was correct it was part of the consultation. However, the consultation was purely a financial assessment since which the Fire Authority had £24 million in a reserve fund out of an operating budget of £49 million, which meant nearly half of its budget was in reserves.

Response times were increasing not only locally but nationally and fire deaths within this brigade had doubled in the last twelve months, which it was felt were linked.

The Fire Authority had asked residents of Rotherham for an increase in its funding through the council tax of 1.9% to raise a further £410,000. The removal of the second appliance had no cash savings proven and admitted by the ASCO, which would lead to significant increase in the risk not only to the residents of Rotherham, but also to fire fighters. My colleagues and I do not want to be stood here in twelve months' time addressing this Council saying we told you so. On behalf of fire fighters in South Yorkshire Mr. Beecher strongly urged the members of this Council and others to engage and talk with Fire Authority members to seriously rethink these dangerous and unnecessary cuts.

The Leader was not an expert on determining where spend and the risk lay. However, he would take away the concerns raised to day and discuss this with the Fire Authority representatives in the way that he suggested.

(5) The Mayor explained the question from Mr. Carbutt was to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Representative, but as both Council representatives were attending the National Fire Authority Conference the response from them would be supplied in writing.

Mr. Carbutt explained he was a Brigade Official for the Fire Brigade's Union and used to attend with Councillors Atkin and Buckley and other Section 41 Members the LGA Conference, but had he been allowed to attend the Conference he could have put the question to them.

He, therefore, indicated the issue of second appliance response times was not mentioned in South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's latest proposal for an integrated risk management plan and asked if he could be informed of the predicted increase or decrease following the removal of the second night time appliance at Rotherham Fire Station.

Due to the consultation period ending before the next Council meeting in a supplementary question Mr. Carbutt indicated that with the wait and resources, appliances and fire fighters' equipment and the speed of attack of vital fire factors, the successful outcome was whilst firefighting. The removal of the second appliance pole time night time was an asset that the people of Rotherham could ill afford to lose. The public consultation period was only six weeks. It could have been twelve weeks and the service have been asked to look at the appliance response times since the 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 and still have not received them. The previous IRMP's response times have been received, but not the predictions following the removal of the second night time appliance in Rotherham. It was vitally important that these were received.

The Fire Brigade Union believed that the public consultation period was insufficient and the information required to provide an informed response as a representative body had not been afforded to the Fire Brigade Union in the correct manner. Would Councillors instruct Fire Authority Members, Councillors Atkin and Buckley, to extend the consultation period and

mandate from this Chamber to revisit the proposals for Rotherham Fire Station and a guarantee was given to work with the Fire Authority Members if they would meet with the Union on providing alternatives so that a balanced budget could be achieved by 2020.

**131. MINUTES OF THE CABINET AND COMMISSIONERS' DECISION MAKING MEETING**

**Resolved:-** That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, be received.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

**132. BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2017-18**

Further to Minute No. 171 of the meeting of the Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, consideration was given to the report which proposed the Council's Budget and Council Tax for 2017/18 based on the outcome of the Council's Final Local Government Financial Settlement, budget consultation and the consideration of Directorate budget proposals through the Council's formal Budget and Scrutiny process (Overview and Scrutiny Management Board) alongside a review of the financial planning assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Leader of the Council confirmed this was the third time that he had had to deliver the budget and the seventh year of Tory austerity and spoke about:-

- 1,700 jobs lost from Rotherham Council over that time period. Potentially another 1,000 to go over the coming three years as another £66 million budget gap was being faced.
- The biggest changes to Local Government funding not just of our lifetimes, but of anyone's lifetime.
- The unprecedented situation of Central Government telling Councils that if they want to meet the growing need of elderly and vulnerable adults – as we do – then we must send the bill to Council tax payers.
- Members having to reflect deeply on the needs of their community, on their priorities, in order to draw together the proposals.
- The thousands of conversations with staff and residents over the last two years resulting in the new Council vision. It's about our home, about our community, and what kind of place we want to live in.

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- Committing an additional £10 million towards improving child safeguarding to recruit more permanent children's social workers, and better equip them for the challenges that they face, recruit more foster carers and support more families to keep children out of care.
- Two years ago additional investment was given to survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham the support that they had long waited for. More than 400 survivors have accessed that support and it would continue.
- The crisis in funding for Adult Social Care and the particular pressures that affect our service. Over the last ten years the adult population of Rotherham had grown by less than 2%, but the population aged over 65 had grown by 10%.
- Through the Adult Social Care levy, investment would be made in meeting the needs of vulnerable young people who were becoming independent adults, and protect services that would otherwise have to be restricted.
- Protecting street cleansing and grounds maintenance in villages and localities. The first £5 million capital investment in the 2020 Roads Programme had already seen an additional 150 roads across the borough resurfaced, and the Council was committed to delivering a further £10 million over the next three years.
- Taking responsibility against the people who litter the environment and who should pay the cost of cleaning it up, with more fines and prosecutions with tougher enforcement.
- Protecting the revenue funding for the economic development team, and standing behind capital investment commitments towards revitalising the town centre. Alongside the commitment to devolution, work will continue with neighbours to help to secure the next generation of jobs and employment.
- In the last year, more than 4000 people relied on the Food for People in Crisis scheme.
- Balancing this budget requires that the council continues to shrink and money would have to be saved on back office support services, on the estate of buildings, tough decisions around Public Health contracts, including ceasing Council funding for the Ministry of Food.
- More revenue would be raised from some more commercial parts of the Council's operations, like the Civic Theatre and Rother Valley Country Park.
- The level of subsidy provided to school support services would shrink.



In setting the proposed 2017/18 Budget, Council were asked to approve an increase of 1.99% in the Council's basic Council Tax and a further 3% increase for the Adult Social Care precept; a combined increase of 4.99% for 2017/18.

Although this report contained proposals to balance the revenue budget for 2017/18, further work needed to be undertaken to bring forward proposals for future years to enable the Council to establish a clear and sustainable financial plan which addresses the estimated £42m financial gap that remained over the next two years (2018 to 2020).

This Budget incorporated over £10m of additional investment in Children's safeguarding and over £3m of additional direct investment in Adult Social Care alongside indirect budget increases resulting from increased costs of current service provision. It will enable the reinstatement of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Living Wage rate from April 2017 for the Council's own staff and will also provide £100k funding to help to partially mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform on the most vulnerable – through the provision of a budget for food parcels and crisis loans.

Whilst doing this, the Budget minimises, as much as possible, the adverse impact on universal services (those which benefit all Rotherham residents as opposed to targeted services for people with specific needs) and also provided some additional income streams related to leisure activities. The Budget would provide resources to support and enable the delivery of the specific savings included within this report and to assist with the development and delivery of the further £42m savings that are required over the next two financial years.

This report also provided feedback from both public and partners in relation to the budget proposals that were published on the Council's website for consultation until 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2017 (Section 5).

Councillor Jepson congratulated officers on the comprehensive documentation presented as part of this item, but could not support the budget proposal going forward due to the concerns and financial penalties for Town and Parish Councils throughout the borough.

Councillor Carter described the Labour Party dominance in Rotherham and risk he believed they were taking in presenting this budget with the current low borrowing rates and prices increasing which, from experience, would lead to interest rates going up.

He described the struggle from another decade of Conservative rule and the forecasts of Labour losing its stronghold. Rotherham's reputation had been damaged, people were struggling and he warned about financial mismanagement. He believed the Labour Party were increasing debt by taking an extension out on Rotherham's mortgage which would have to be paid back at some point. The proposals were for a 5% rise in Council Tax under an administration who had not collected £8 million in Council Tax

and Business Rates forcing working families to pay more whilst letting businesses off the hook. He urged Members to reject the budget and he himself would be voting against.

Councillor Beck referred to Appendix 3b of the Capital Programme for 2017/18 and the fund of £7.5 million, which was to replace Council houses lost through the Right to Buy Scheme which forecasted at 160 homes for this next year.

The Council in Rotherham was committed to delivering and creating a strong housing market that everyone could access and for those that could not access the housing market there were services here prepared to support them. Every effort was being made to create more housing for people in the social housing sector where they needed it most and on this basis he was fully in support of the budget.

Councillor Steele described the cuts enforced on this Council by the initial Coalition Government and the now Conservative Government. Rotherham was having to manage on less money, but would continue to protect the most vulnerable, protect the elderly and protect the young.

He expressed his surprise at the comments made by Councillor Carter at his first Council meeting and would have liked to have seen his alternative budget had he submitted one. Whilst the whole Budget had been scrutinised and agreed there were still some concerns, but this would be supported and monitored over the next twelve months.

Councillor Cooksey referred to the austerity programme which illustrated vast power differentials between local and national Government, the burden transfer of responsibility onto Councils, the biggest squeeze on spending by local authorities by 37% which would fall further and how poorer the area the greater its needs and reliance on government grants which saw Rotherham within the 20% of the most deprived areas suffering with things such as child poverty and lower life expectancy. Austerity was not a political choice and not a necessity. The Tory Government must be held responsible for the cuts.

Councillor Ellis echoed the views of her colleagues about why the Council was having to make cuts in services. She expressed her sadness on International Women's Day that the average Rotherham woman suffered in poor health for twenty-two years and the average man for twenty-one years with the expectation on Local Government to do their best.

This was an abdication of responsibility and a disgrace and also an abdication of UKIP's responsibility for not putting forward an alternative budget. It was a disappointment that last year the then Leader indicated the party had no business acumen and felt they could not present an alternative budget, which could be the same view as their present leader. More was needed from this present Government and more from the UKIP party, the main opposition.

Councillor B. Cutts described the current situation in the present Council as wanting more, more and more and drew attention to the position with children's homes, the current economics and the need to keep eyes open and look deeper. He would be objecting to the proposals.

Councillor Short responded on behalf of the UKIP Party who made a conscious decision not to submit an alternative budget, for one it would have been voted against, but secondly Members of UKIP had participated fully in the budget and the detailed savings proposals. He described the contribution to the preparation of the budget, which had little room for alternatives and the difficulty facing the authority through the use of reserves. Any figures quoted by the UKIP Party had been authenticated by officers. He referred to poor financial practices in the past and how this situation would no longer be allowed or accepted.

Overspends in Children and Young People's Services were well documented and he wished to comment on the financial position and going forward to what extent could the Council be confident to deliver in 2017/18 with no overspend, to what extent would the Council be able to deliver savings for 2018/19, the extent to identify and deliver sustainably the new savings gap of £40 m for the next two years. The proposed requirement of £3m per annum to replenish the reserves was quoted and he questioned the strategy to use reserves earlier and replenish later, whether it would be possible to replenish at a later date and what would be the position if not possible.

Questions had been raised with managers about the savings proposals and the confidence of delivery. This would very much depend on Cabinet Members holding officers to account and the need for remedial matters to bring budgets back into control.

Questions again were asked if the Council had sufficient reserves for unseen eventualities given the high reductions and whether it was safe to go below the level recommended.

In summary, Scrutiny had requested monthly budget monitoring reports and it was suggested that should there be an overspend officers come prepared with remedial action to what action was required to get budget under control.

The Budget proposals would be supported as it was recognised the Council had to allocate resources accordingly without putting itself in too much debt.

Councillor Roche endorsed the comments by the Leader about Adult Social Care and protecting the most vulnerable people in our town. Cuts were now impacting on front line services since all back office efficiencies had been realised. It was difficult to make comparisons with what other authorities were doing. Members were not happy having to make cuts, but there was simply nowhere else to go.

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Councillor Sheppard indicated this was the seventh straight year of cuts, the cause of the cuts and how austerity decisions were not necessary, but political. Here in Rotherham difficult choices had to be made with the budget and how those most vulnerable could be protected.

Councillor Watson echoed Councillor Sheppard and Councillor Cooksey's comments and the political choice of austerity and the choices that had led to the preparation of the Budget today.

Cabinet Members had been questioned and scrutinised, but a sensible conclusion had now been reached with sound financial management which he had been party to, which included sensible decisions for Children and Young People's Services.

Councillor Sansome also passed comments on the practices of the coalition and current Government.

This Budget was not one anyone wanted to vote for as it was driven by the Government cuts and not by aspirations. However, as part of the Budget process financial reports had been requested on a monthly basis and had involved the Strategic Director for Finance attending to explain how she was keeping control of the spend.

Councillor Hoddinott responsible for Waste, Roads and Community Safety outlined the challenges facing services which had had to adapt to the cuts to the budget.

This year would see the continuation of the 2020 Roads Programme with an extra £10m funding to the resurfacing of the roads, which Members had fed into. In other areas close working would continue with businesses and residents in keeping areas looking smart through sponsorship and volunteering opportunities.

The point by Councillor Jepson was noted. There were huge opportunities to work together. These were no easy times, but this Budget protected services that mattered to residents, delivering services what Councillors were elected to do and most importantly provided for investment into Children's Services. Councillor Hoddinott was proud to vote for the Budget.

In response Councillor Read advised Councillor Jepson that the Parish Council grant given by Government had been folded into the Revenue Support Grant and whilst he could understand his and Parish Council concerns, it was not there any longer.

He welcomed Councillor Short's contribution and explained the savings were there to be delivered with no place to hide.

Councillor Read advised Members that the demand pressures on social care were causing difficulties, but the Council would face the difficulties over the course of the next few years.

Was this Budget sustainable, it was not known as the Council had never been in this position. However, comparatively Rotherham was in a good position and a long way from failing to discharge statutory responsibilities, but it was uncertain if this continuation of savings could be delivered.

Drawing attention to the reserves the proposals would allow for half of additional investment smooth over medium term, whilst minimising the impact on other services. It was right and proper that Members held officers to account.

Austerity was a political choice, endorsed by coalition and this Government and comments about taking risks from the budget and borrowing and Council Tax collection rates (which were in the top 1% in the country) were unfair criticism. The Council was in the right place for paying the cost of borrowing to assist with the capital programme and budget investments.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the Budget and Financial Strategy for 2017/18, as set out in the report and appendices, including the need to deliver £24m of budget savings and a basic Council Tax increase of 1.99%, be approved.

(2) That the Government's proposals for the maximum Adult Social Care precept of 3% on Council Tax for 2017/18 to fund additional costs and investment in Adult Social Care Services be approved.

(3) That the precept figures from South Yorkshire Police Authority, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority and the various Parish Councils within the Borough to be incorporated into Council Tax bills as set out in the Statutory Resolution in Appendix 6 be noted.

(4) That that an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) be brought back to Cabinet in 2017/18 after the accounts for 2016/17 have been closed.

(5) That the proposed use of reserves as set out in Section 3.5 be approved.

(6) That the comments and advice of the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer), provided in compliance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, as to the robustness of the estimates included in the Budget and the adequacy of reserves for which the Budget provides (Section 3.9) be noted and supported.

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(7) That the consultation feedback from the public and partners following publication of Directorate budget savings proposals on the Council's website for public comment from 1st December 2016 to 3rd January 2017 (Section 5) be noted.

(8) That the use of in-year Capital Receipts to maximise capitalisation opportunities arising from service reconfiguration to deliver efficiencies and improved outcomes for clients and residents, and thereby minimise the impact of costs on the revenue budget as included in the Flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2017/18 (Appendix 5) be approved.

(9) That the proposed Capital Strategy as presented in Section 3.7 and Appendix 3A and 3B, to a value of £280.240m be approved. This required prudential borrowing of £49.636m to fund non-HRA schemes over the five year period, for which provision has been made in the revenue budget for the associated financing costs.

(10) That the Capital Strategy budget be approved and managed in line with the following key principles:-

- i. Any underspends on the existing approved Capital Programme in respect of 2016/17 be rolled forward into future years, subject to an individual review of each carry forward by the Strategic Capital Investment Group.
- ii. In line with Financial Regulation 13.8, any successful grant applications in respect of capital projects will be added to the Council's approved Capital Programme. This will include projects that are included within the Development Pool, where funding has yet to be identified.
- iii. Capitalisation opportunities and capital receipts flexibilities will be maximised, with capital receipts earmarked to minimise revenue costs.

(11) That the prudential indicators and limits for 2017/18 to 2019/20 contained in this report. (Appendix 4 – Section 3.1 – 3.4) be approved.

(12) That the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement which sets out the Council's policy (Appendix 4 – Annex A) be approved.

(13) That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/18 to 2019/20 and the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator (Appendix 4 – Section 3.5) be approved.

(14) That the Investment Strategy for 2017/18 to 2019/20 (Appendix 4 – Section 3.5.5) be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Read, Leader

Seconder:- Councillor Alam

(The Mayor (Councillor Lyndsay Pitchley); Councillors Alam, Albiston, Allen, Andrews, Beaumont, Beck, Bird, Brookes, Clark, Cooksey, Cusworth, J. Elliot, M. Elliott, R. Elliott, Ellis, Fenwick-Green, Hoddinott, Ireland, Jarvis, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Mallinder, Marles, Marriott, Napper, Read, Reeder, Roche, Rushforth, Russell, Sansome, Senior, Sheppard, Short, Steele, Taylor, Julie Turner, Tweed, Vjestica, Walsh, Watson, Williams, Wilson, Whysall, Wyatt and Yasseen voted in favour of the proposals)

(Councillors Carter, B. Cutts and Jepson voted against the proposals)

**133. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER**

Consideration was given to a report of the Returning Officer reported that the persons indicated below had been elected Members of the Council at the election held on Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2017.

| Forename (s)  | Surname  | Ward                     | No of votes polled |
|---------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Adam Jonathon | Carter   | Brinsworth and Catcliffe | 2000               |
| John          | Vjestica | Dinnington               | 670                |

**Resolved:-** That the report of the Returning Officer be received.

Proposer – Councillor Read

Secunder – Councillor Watson

**134. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND'S REVIEW OF WARD BOUNDARIES IN ROTHERHAM**

Consideration was given to a report which confirmed the Council had now received confirmation that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was minded to recommend that fifty-nine councillors should be elected in future. The next stage of the Commission's review of ward boundaries was to consult on the future make up of electoral wards across the borough.

The report detailed what was involved in the next stage of the review and outlined a recommended approach for the Council, the importance of which was urged to Members, in readiness of submitting a warding arrangement proposal to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's decision for fifty-nine councillors to be elected in Rotherham from May 2020 be noted.

(2) That the report and timetable for the remainder of the ward boundary review be noted.

(3) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Constitution Working Group, to submit a proposal on behalf of the Council in respect of warding arrangements to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

**135. DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CHECKS ON COUNCILLORS**

Consideration was given to a report which confirmed that all current Councillors serving on Rotherham M.B.C. have been subject to a check on offences and convictions by Disclosure and Barring Service.

**Resolved:-** That the report be noted.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

**136. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2017-18**

Consideration was given to a report which set out the Calendar of Meetings for the 2017-18 municipal year, which would be adjusted accordingly should there be a need for a change.

Councillor B. Cutts asked that consideration be given to increasing the frequency of meetings of full Council in order to reduce the number of pages on each agenda.

The Leader confirmed the number of pages had increased as a result of ensuring all Members had all the relevant reports on which to make a decision.

Councillor Steele also pointed out that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had also moved its meeting date to a Wednesday instead of a Friday to maintain a more appropriate pre-scrutiny work flow from Cabinet.

Councillor Walsh pointed out that the order of business was not only for Members of the Council, but more transparent for members of the public.

**Resolved:-** That the Calendar of Meetings for the 2017-18 municipal year be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

**137. NOTICE OF MOTION - SAVE ROTHERHAM POST OFFICE**

Moved by Councillor Yasseen and seconded by Councillor Alam

That this Council notes the recent announcement to close Rotherham Post Office on Bridgegate, unless it can be franchised with a partner.



We call on the Post Office and Government to reverse this decision. We are concerned there are limited options for a franchise partner in town, meaning a closure is likely if this route is pursued.

The Post Office network has been reduced by more than 50% over the past 30 years and this is a step too far. Rotherham Post Office is very well used and the decision would be detrimental to customers. As a Crown Post Office it provides services that are not available elsewhere for example, with regards to driving licenses and passports, these would be a big loss to residents in Rotherham.

We call on the Council to write to the Post Office and Government outlining our concerns and encourage all Members to sign and promote the petition against this decision.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried unanimously by the Council.

**138. NOTICE OF MOTION - ORGREAVE INQUIRY**

Moved by Councillor Steele and seconded by Councillor Williams

Rotherham Council condemns Amber Rudd, Home Secretary's rejection on 31st October 2016 in Parliament of an Orgreave Inquiry as a grave injustice. We believe the events of 18<sup>th</sup> June 1984 here in Rotherham at Orgreave demand there be an inquiry.

This Council is appalled by the decision not to hold an inquiry into the policing of picket lines at the Orgreave coking plant 18th June 1984 Miners' Strike. With this ruling, Amber Rudd has shown great contempt for the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign, many former miners, their families and communities who for more than 32 years have waited for the truth and who have displayed huge courage and tenacity in trying to hold the authorities to account.

This Council observes that even the Independent Police Complaints Commission said in their redacted report released June 2015 "that there was "evidence of excessive violence by police officers, a false narrative from police exaggerating violence by miners, perjury by officers giving evidence to prosecute the arrested men, and an apparent cover-up of that perjury by senior officers".

This Council is astonished that in the light of such statements Home Secretary Amber Rudd concludes that there are few lessons to be learned by the current police forces from any review of these events, that no one died, there was no miscarriage of justice, no convictions and therefore there will be no inquiry.

This Council notes that 95 miners were arrested and charged with riot offences, but all were later acquitted amid claims that South Yorkshire Police had fabricated evidence. There were also widespread examples of pickets being beaten unconscious by police officers. The miners suffered such treatment simply for exercising their right to protest against the threat to their jobs, their industry and communities.

It is shameful that as yet, no-one has to answer for the events of that day. Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 was a bad day for justice. We do however salute the decision of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign to continue with its fight for transparency and a full public inquiry.

This Council will write to the Home Secretary asking that she takes into account the opinion of this Council, accepts that there is wide spread public concern about the events at Orgreave and calls on her to order an inquiry into them.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried by the Council.

**139. STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**Resolved:-** That the reports, recommendation and minutes of the meetings of the Standards and Ethics Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor McNeely

Seconder:- Councillor Khan

**140. AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**Resolved:-** That the reports, recommendation and minutes of the meetings of the Audit Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Seconder:- Councillor Walsh

**141. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE - PROCUREMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS - 2018/19 AND BEYOND**

**Resolved:-** (1) That the recommendation of Audit Committee be approved for the Council to opt into the sector-led option for the procurement and appointment of external audit from 2018/19 onwards.

(2) That the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services be delegated authority to complete and submit the opt in form (Appendix A) to PSAA by the deadline of the 9th March, 2017.

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Seconder:- Councillor Walsh

**142. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

**Resolved:-** That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Roche

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

**143. PLANNING BOARD**

**Resolved:-** That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Planning Board be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Tweed

Seconder:- Councillor Sansome

**144. LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Resolved:-** That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Board Sub-Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Ellis

Seconder:- Councillor Rushforth

**145. STAFFING COMMITTEE**

**Resolved:-** That the reports, recommendation and minutes of the meetings of the Staffing Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Seconder:- Councillor Read

**146. RECOMMENDATION FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE - PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2017**

**Resolved:-** That the Pay Policy Statement for 2017-18 be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Seconder:- Councillor Read

**147. RECOMMENDATION FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE - LIVING WAGE**

**Resolved:-** That an increase in the Council's Living Wage rate to £8.45 from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2017 and a commitment to an annual review to consider budget position and grading risks be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Seconder:- Councillor Read

**148. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS**

There were none.

**149. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN**

**(1) Councillor Cusworth** asked what support is the Council providing to Brookfield Primary Academy in Swinton, since Ofsted gave the school an overall rating of "inadequate" following their recent inspection in September, 2016.

Councillor Watson confirmed that since the Ofsted inspection, one of the Principal Advisors from the Local Authority had met with the Executive Head Teacher and co-constructed a package of support which was available to the Academy. As part of this, extra support had been given to Brookfield Academy to strengthen its safeguarding processes and systems. In addition, teaching staff have attended the Council's SATS preparation and moderation sessions and the Executive Head Teacher attended the recent Primary Head Teachers' meeting, which focused on elements of best practice.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cusworth understood the Council had previously offered support to the school, but this was not accepted. However, with a new Head Teacher in place could the Council give assurances that they and Wakefield Academy Trust were now working together.

Councillor Watson confirmed in part. Prior to the inspection the school decided it did not want to take advantage of the Rotherham's School Improvement Services offer. Since the inspection, however, the school had been willing to work with the Council and the Head Teacher and the Senior School Improvement Adviser had co-produced a package. However, at this moment in time financial approval from Wakefield Academy Trust was still awaited.

**(2) Councillor Carter** asked what was South Yorkshire Labour's united policy on devolution to the Sheffield City Region.

The Leader explained how the Combined Authority was made up of the Leaders of the four South Yorkshire authorities who wished to continue moving forward with the Sheffield devolution deal. The Combined Authority regretted the impact and judicial review from Derbyshire, but accepted the consequence of this whilst getting into the right place legally. This now meant that the election for Mayor would be moved back to 2018.

Leaders would continue to pursue what options they believed for their own local authorities and this was the view the Leader had taken on behalf of this authority.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked why, when the South Yorkshire Members of Parliament had taken a different stance looking towards a Yorkshire-wide version, could the Leaders not agree this between them.

The Leader pointed agreement had been reached on the position of the Combined Authority. However, he pointed out to Members that each Leader had a responsibility to their own areas and to pursue a devolution deal in the best way. He was personally unconvinced about a Yorkshire model of devolution as it would prove difficult to get this. Some people may think it may be possible to do this and some people think it may be possible to achieve this and keep the Combined Authority for the Sheffield City Region with one Mayor for the whole of the Yorkshire area. All options would be examined as they came forward, but it was the Leader's view that the Sheffield City Region was the best option for Rotherham and only option being pursued at this time.

(3) **Councillor Napper** asked in the interest of democracy could the Leader tell the ratepayers of Rotherham why they were not given a referendum or vote on whether we should become a part of the Sheffield Region or not.

The Leader explained Rotherham became part of the Sheffield City Region when it was established in 2004. It was not a requirement of the legislation then for local authorities to decide whether it should hold a referendum.

The Leader assured Members that Rotherham was not becoming part of Sheffield, but on the basis of the economic footprint, with Sheffield as the big city in our area, to access funding and powers from Government to make decisions in our area of the country which would be more beneficial to ratepayers. The benefits could not be delivered in advance and people would make up their own minds if the decision to proceed was the right one. This was indeed a commitment made as a party back in May and the direction of travel the Council wished to proceed on.

(4) **Councillor Carter** asked what was the Council's preferred HS2 route through South Yorkshire?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the Council's preferred HS2 route through South Yorkshire was via a station adjacent to the M1 Motorway near Meadowhall.

At the Council meeting on 7th September, 2016 (Minute No. 11A) the Council agreed a motion to this effect and the position had not changed since then.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked what public consultation was performed on behalf of the Council to come to that Council position for that preferred route.

Councillor Lelliott explained consultation was undertaken by HS2 Ltd. via Area Assemblies and the public. The Council, however, had not undertaken any public consultation as the cost of consulting across the whole borough, during difficult financial times, would be colossal to

influence a decision which it may not have any control over. The Council believed the best economic option and benefits to the people of Rotherham was for a station adjacent to the M1 Motorway near Meadowhall and not the other options put forward.

**(5) Councillor Napper** asked what measures did the Council take to tackle housing fraud with regards to the right to buy, where someone had previously bought a Council house.

Councillor Beck explained purchasing a property under the Right to Buy when the applicant had already bought under the Right to Buy before was not in itself a form of fraud and the relevant legislation did not prevent this from happening. However, in such circumstances the applicant was obliged to formally declare any previous discount they have received on the claim form itself; this was so that the applicant's current eligible discount could be reduced accordingly. Failure to declare a discount previously received would be a form of fraud.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper pointed out he had been led to believe this had happened on a couple of occasions where someone had obtained a Council house, lived in it and then got another one.

Councillor Beck asked if Councillor Napper was aware of any particular cases if he contacted him he would endeavour to look into this further.

**(6) Councillor Carter's question had been asked as a supplementary to Question No. 4.**

**(7) Councillor Napper** referred to fly tipping on the old Silverwood site of building waste, old settees etc. which were dumped out of site of the road/footpaths. This was private land owned by Ogdens Ltd. but was open to public access and asked what could RMBC do to help sites on this nature reserve.

Councillor Hoddinott explained the blight of fly tipping was a problem not just in Rotherham and Keep Britain Tidy had reported only this week of up to fifty incidents a day. Some of the examples given relate to professional fly tippers who were being paid and who were flaunting rules and dumping in places such as this.

Whilst the site was private land, the Council could assist landowners to protect their land from fly-tipping. This might include the use of barriers or boulders for example, to prevent access or assistance with evidence gathering and prosecution. Councillor Hoddinott would check officers were in touch with the landowners to help and support them to put measures in place and also catch those doing it.

**(8) Councillor Carter** asked what was the Leader's preferred HS2 route through South Yorkshire?

The Leader explained the preferred HS2 route which brought the maximum benefit to Rotherham and the whole of the Sheffield City Region was via a station adjacent to the M1 Motorway near Meadowhall.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked, given that fact, the route proposed would cost £1 billion extra what services would the Council Leader cut to fund this Meadowhall Station.

The Leader believed the DfT had indicated they could save £1 billion to run a spur through the centre of Sheffield, but would need to electrify the route through the middle of Sheffield which would cost £500,000. There were a number of costs associated with taking a spur route through to Sheffield including protection across the Parkway. A formal statement had been submitted to Government as part of the consultation process pointing out that we think they were mistaken in terms of the cost analysis.

**(9) Councillor Napper** referred to a recent interview where the Minister for Housing stated that only in exceptional circumstances would the building of houses on Green Belt land be allowed and only after the available brown belt land had been used and asked what exceptional circumstances did the Bassingthorpe Farm Project have.

Councillor Lelliott explained the National Planning Policy Framework allowed for the alteration of Green Belt boundaries through the preparation or review of a Local Plan, which the Council had been doing and which could then identify key sites that could provide for new housing in the future.

The Bassingthorpe Farm site was removed from the Green Belt when the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in September, 2014. This was a key strategic site delivering over 2,000 homes. This was the only site available to deliver that level of housing and to fit in with the Local Plan which was currently sitting with the Local Planning Inspector for approval.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper asked why in our current plan we were proposing to take 40 acres at Todwick for building and 30 and 16 hectares on Cumwell Lane as this was just eating up the Green Belt.

Councillor Lelliott pointed out that as part of the Local Plan key sites had to be identified. If not the Government would identify the sites for us. Originally the Government were instructing the Council to build over 20,000 homes, but following appeal this number was reduced to just over 14,000.

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A decision on the Local Plan was due in May and this would then be brought to Members. It was the Council's intention to only want to build houses on the sites identified and to minimise building houses on the Green Belt.

**(10) Councillor Carter** asked what were the room hire fees charged by RMBC for the use of Town Hall rooms for party political meetings?

The Leader reported on the long standing arrangement where Elected Members were able to use the Town Hall meetings rooms for political and group meetings free of charge.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter referred to political meetings and the intention in the budget to increase revenue from room hire and asked why the two political parties were holding political meetings in the Council rooms.

The Leader again explained about the long standing policy in Rotherham whereby Councillors were able to meet with their political colleagues free of charge.

**(11) Councillor Napper** asked when was the survey done to show that 81% of Rotherham residents were happy with Rotherham.

Councillor Hoddinott explained the survey in question was an independent survey commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA) and conducted by Populus Data Solutions.

A statistically representative random sample of 520 Rotherham adults was interviewed by telephone and asked:-

"Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?"

81% of respondents said that they were very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

This was noted as there had been a rise in the number of residents saying they were satisfied with Rotherham which was something to recognise and be proud of.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper pointed out that in the letters to the Rotherham Advertiser quite a few residents were not satisfied and did not like coming into Rotherham town centre which made you wonder why.

Councillor Hoddinott explained that from those surveyed 19% were still dissatisfied and may be disproportionately represented so there was still work to do to address the concerns and ensure that they were satisfied with Rotherham as a place to live.



**(12) Councillor Carter** asked what was the Council doing with Adult Social Care to ensure that the most vulnerable people in Rotherham received the care they deserve?

Councillor Roche explained the Council's priorities for Adult Services was for every adult to be secure responsible and empowered. The Adult Social Care Vision and Strategy set out the ambition that "adults with disabilities and older people and their carers in Rotherham were supported to be independent and resilient so that they could live good quality lives and enjoy good health and wellbeing".

The Strategy would enable these outcomes to be delivered and contained seven key elements:-

- We must ensure that information, advice and guidance is readily available (e.g. by increasing self-assessment) and there are a wide range of community assets which are accessible.
- We must focus on maintaining independence through prevention and early intervention (e.g. assistive technology) and enablement and rehabilitation.
- We must improve our approach to personalised services – always putting users and carers at the centre of everything we do.
- We must develop integrated services with partners and where feasible single points of access.
- We must ensure we "make safeguarding personal".
- We must commission services effectively working in partnership and co-producing with users and carers.
- We must use our resources effectively.

There was an Improvement Board in place to oversee the changes that were required to the Adult Social Care service.

There were several groups of vulnerable people in Rotherham and it would take a long time to explain the level of support provided to each of these groups. However, Councillor Roche was happy to meet with Councillor Carter if he required it. Large cuts to these services had introduced initially by the coalition and then more recently by the current Government. However, as a result of external reviews the direction of travel now seen in Rotherham was positive.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked, given only fifty words was allowed for questions, could the Cabinet Member keep his answer brief next time.

**(13) Councillor Mick Elliott** referred to the recent news of progress on the Forge Island Site development which was most welcome, but asked when would this Council address the eyesore of the derelict and fire ravaged properties on Corporation Street?

Councillor Lelliott explained the Council was keen to see progress on this site, but progress was limited. If a property was deemed safe then nothing could be done unless a plan was in place for that building.

Over the last eighteen months numerous letters had been sent to the last known address of the owners of those properties. However, in order to purchase a property under Compulsory Purchase Order a plan must be in place for that property. As Members may be aware the Town Centre Masterplan was to be launched and once this identified the properties on Corporation Street the Compulsory Purchase Order process could commence. These were strict Government and legal guidelines that must be followed.

In a supplementary question Councillor Mick Elliott indicated that, although the Council was keen to regenerate the town and once the masterplan had been received from consultants, why were the Council not doing more and being more proactive with the demolition everyone knows about. Corporation Street was mentioned, but there were also eyesores on the corner of Hollowgate with scaffolding which had been around a building for a number of years and what must visiting fans think of the eyesore on the Guest and Chrimes site. He, therefore, asked if there were any plans to intervene to resolve the stalemate situation with that building.

Councillor Lelliott explained the building on the Guest and Chrimes site was Grade 2 listed, but this all came back to the plan and reiterated the Council had little control over properties they did not own.

The masterplan would underpin regeneration and discussions were taking place with developers in looking at key sites in the area. In terms of progress New York Stadium was a derelict site, but more could now be done with the purchase of Forge Island, the law courts and the new H.E. Campus on the old Doncaster Gate Hospital site.

**(14) Councillor Carter** asked what determined when a library was upgraded or refurbished?

Councillor Yasseen explained all Council properties were subject to a five year cycle of condition surveys, which determined what works were required to maintain the condition of the estate.

These condition works were then prioritised against the funding available with health and safety and keeping the building open the priority.

Councillor Carter was possibly alluding to the Brinsworth and Catcliffe library which was a portacabin internally and had existed for many years. Whilst being maintained it was old, small and really unfit for purpose. Over the past year discussions had been taking place with Polly Hamilton, Elenore Fisher, the Parish Council and Councillor Buckley regarding viable options for better library provision as part of the new Library Strategy, which would look to use buildings as a community hub providing more than one relevant service.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked would the administration assure Brinsworth Library would be upgraded by the end of 2019.

Councillor Yasseen was unable to give the reassurance at this stage and outlined the important piece of work in the Place Review looking at localities which was being supported by the Cabinet. This would ensure that services were in the right place with the right level of provision. In addition two applications for funding had been submitted to Innovation Funding, which would facilitate some of the preliminary work in Brinsworth. Councillor Carter was urged to make contact and contribute to this work along with Councillor Buckley.

(15) Councillor Mick Elliott commended that Council Meetings and Committees were webcast to the public. It provided openness and transparency, but asked what was the cost of the service provider to Rotherham taxpayers?

The Leader explained that Council had a contract with Public-i who hosted many Council meetings and cost the Council £18,000 per year.

In a supplementary question Councillor Mick Elliott asked would it be more cost effective to upload the webcast image to You Tube like other Councils as the cost as far as he was aware would be minimal.

The Leader confirmed this had been looked at when webcasting had been introduced. The issue was around staffing and the organisational time required. The decision was based on our current system being the most cost effective way of doing it on a streaming basis.

**(16) Councillor Carter** asked what was the Council's policy for reviewing road safety measures on roads?

Councillor Hoddinott reported the Council was guided by the Safer Roads Partnership Safer Roads Casualty Reduction Strategy which looked at a number of factors, including the number of accidents in an area balanced against what could be done to re-model and improve road safety.

Councillor Carter referred to a pensioner being injured in the summer on Bawtry Road in Brinsworth and asked if the Council was waiting for someone to die before it reviewed road safety on this road.

Councillor Hoddinott understood Councillor Carter had been campaigning for local residents on this and asked that the petition in circulation be submitted so the Council could address those concerns.

(17) **Councillor Sansome** referred to a commitment at a recent OSMB concerning apprenticeships and further education for those children in care to be able to achieve the required grades and gain invaluable work experience and asked could the Deputy Leader advise if/how many have been successfully offered an apprenticeship and further education.

Councillor Watson referred to the Corporate Parenting Panel where it was reported that 72% of care leavers were in Education Employment or Training. This was much higher than the national average of 48%. Of the remaining 28%, 13% were unavailable for work due to personal circumstances, leaving 15% or thirty-three young people, who were actively seeking to engage in some sort of positive learning and development activity.

It was also very pleasing to report that twelve care leavers were in Higher Education, which was in line with national averages and plans were being developed to ensure all care leavers have access to an apprenticeship if this is the route they choose.

Often children who had been in care had not had a good educational experience and had not achieve the five A-C's GCSEs required. Work was now taking place on pre-apprenticeship programmes so by the time a young person arrived at apprenticeship age they had the right tools to obtain placements.

In a supplementary question Councillor Sansome asked if the other Directorates were offering the same commitment to deliver the same apprenticeships and work experience and suggested this be moved onto the work plan for the Improving Lives Select Commission.

Councillor Watson confirmed he was happy to work with the Improving Lives Select Commission and explained the Council's partner, Wilmot Dixon, was ringfencing sixteen apprenticeships for care leavers. This long train of work was happening alongside the Chamber of Trade and other departments.

(18) **Councillor Carter** referred to international companies moving to the Advanced Manufacturing Park, it was the image of Rotherham people would see and asked what was the Council doing about the appearance of that area?

Councillor Lelliott explained that it was marvellous that Rotherham was successfully associated with global brands like McLaren and Boeing who were choosing to invest here and strengthen the already world-class facilities at the Advanced Manufacturing Park.

Maintenance of the AMP site and common areas was managed by the landowner Harworth Estates through a service charge arrangement with the various occupiers and work was taking place with the developers to ensure a masterplan was in place that considered place-making and environment and importantly delivered high-quality development and a broad range of amenities in an attractive setting.

If there were any specific complaints or areas of concerns Councillor Lelliott asked that Councillor Carter pass these on.

**(19) Councillor B. Cutts** asked what was the annual cost of translation in Rotherham over the last five years and how was it incurred, but he confirmed he was content with the detail being placed in the minutes and did not require an answer being read out in full.

Councillor Read, the Leader, chose to explain the average annual cost of interpretation services over the last five years was approximately £188k per annum. 90% of the cost was allocated to the two social care departments for translation services for the borough's most vulnerable residents.

In a supplementary question Councillor B. Cutts asked if the year on year cost information could be set out in detail in writing and be included as part of the addendum to the minutes.

The Leader confirmed the detail would be forwarded onto Councillor Cutts.

**(20) Councillor Carter** referred to a lot of money being spent to try to improve the traffic flow around the Advanced Manufacturing Park and asked why had money been wasted on expensive unused traffic lights nearby?

Councillor Hoddinott welcomed the opportunity to share information about the traffic lights and explained the scheme to improve traffic flows around the Advanced Manufacturing Park at Waverley was designed and funded by Harworth Estates as part of planning requirements.

There have been delays in terms of switching on the traffic signals due to further design work being required. The developer's contractor was now finalising arrangements to fully implement the scheme, which would be extremely helpful for the safety of pedestrians.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter referred to the changing layouts and signage at the Morrisons junction and the previous promises that the lights would be in operation for the New Year and asked why there was currently a delay and if a date had been set for the lights to be switched on.

Councillor Hoddinott again confirmed the delays were with Harworth's contractors. Further information on an operation date would be sought.

**(21) Councillor B. Cutts** asked what was the number of new "registered" foreign nationals living in Rotherham. He agreed to this information being provided in writing and pointed out not all the questions were directed from him, but were as a result of interest expressed by the public.

**(22) Councillor Carter** asked what was the Council doing to ensure that class sizes remained at or below an optimum maximum class size of 30 in primary schools in Rotherham?

Councillor Watson explained no infant class sizes (reception, year 1 and year 2) were allowed to be above 30 pupils to one qualified teacher ratio, under the DfE's infant class size legislation. The only exceptions allowed to this legally were classed as 'excepted pupils'. As the pupils move from infant to junior phase, class structures are maintained.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked given some schools in Brinsworth and Catcliffe had class sizes of thirty four what class size did the Council deem unacceptable.

Councillor Watson explained any class sizes above the thirty limit were due to excepted pupils allocated as a result of a successful appeal by an independent appeals panel, if the child was looked after or previously looked after, or if a child's Social Health and Care Plan named a particular school. If Councillor Carter wished to discuss this further and put the details in writing the Deputy Leader was more than happy to assist.

**(23) Councillor B. Cutts** asked when the Commissioners were returning full control back to the Cabinet Member, why was there "no" member of the opposition present, was the meeting minuted and how do the public know if or what had changed?

Councillor Read, the Leader, confirmed he did not fully understand the nature of the question, but confirmed the returning of powers to the Council was subject to review by the Joint Improvement Board, chaired by the Lead Commissioner, which the Leader of the Opposition attended. It was also pointed out that any further return of powers by the Secretary of State to the Council on the recommendation of the Commissioners had been well publicised in the local media and within the Council and was available to members of the public via the Council's website.

In a supplementary question Councillor B. Cutts asked where members of the public could look for the information and be advised and what changed.

Councillor Read, the Leader, referred Councillor Cutts to the area where formal decisions were recorded by the Cabinet and Commissioners, the Forward Plan of Key Decisions and on the agendas for Cabinet/Commissioner decision making where it was fully documented who the decision maker was.

**(24) Councillor Carter** asked what distance did the Council deem acceptable for a child to have to travel to primary school?

Councillor Watson explained the DfE determined that two miles for primary schools and three miles for secondary schools was a reasonable distance to travel to school.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked was it acceptable for some children from Waverley to travel past two primary schools.

Councillor Watson confirmed that without the details about the children it was impossible to determine if it was acceptable or not as it could well be the parents had chosen particular schools for their children.

This authority had an excellent track record in ensuring access to good schools locally, with consistently higher than national averages for families securing their first, second or third school and 94% received their first choice against the national figure of 67%. It was also pointed out there were no children who were not offered a place in their local catchment school, but the Deputy Leader was happy to look at individual cases.

**(25) Councillor B. Cutts** asked what was the updated circumstances with respect to RMBC re-purchasing the leases of the retail units between Corporation Street and Forge Island?

Councillor Lelliott reported that should a deal be agreed the Council would expect Heads of Terms to be complete by the June, 2017.

**(26) Councillor Carter** asked was it acceptable for primary school children to be forced to walk along a muddy unlit path to get to school?

Councillor Watson explained there should be a safe walking route to any local school within a resident's catchment area for school. If there were concerns about a particular designated walking route, then if details could be provided, he would ask Officers to investigate further.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter referred to some children from the Waverley estate walking along unlit muddy routes and would appreciate work on this to rectify the matter.

The Deputy Leader asked Councillor Carter to furnish him with details immediately after the meeting and he would start working on it the following day.

**(27) Councillor B. Cutts** considered this to be a misuse of yellow pages and asked what circumstances or condition dictated that the public should “not” be party to and know the content of the agreement to the transfer of part of Boston Castle Park from Rotherham Council to the Yorkshire Water (yellow pages 75-80 Council Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2017).

Councillor Yasseen corrected the assumption that the decision on this land transfer had already taken place, when negotiations were still ongoing as to whether the site was appropriate and that the right site was chosen. The two bits of information which were exempt from the press and public were the valuation of Yorkshire Water’s land and the valuation of the Council land, which was information that was not in the public domain.

Councillor B. Cutts believed the response he had received was typical of yellow pages being used unnecessarily. Almost the same circumstances were happening on the other side of town with all the public knowing about it. He asked who were the Friends of Boston Castle and were they members of the public. He had received confirmation that the people involved were members of the public, but we as a Council chose to put information on yellow pages. On the one hand members of the public were discussing and agreeing matters and yet, the same subject, was restricted to Members.

Councillor Yasseen explained the Friends of Boston Castle were in fact volunteers and again emphasised that the reasons for the restrictions were due to the good negotiations taking place with Yorkshire Water on site suitability, accountability, land transfer and contributions. Whilst no decision had yet been made the Council were wanting to ensure that matters were dealt with effectively and the best site was sought, whilst bearing in mind the possibility of Yorkshire Water’s right of compulsory purchase. The two bits of confidential information referred to were the valuation of Yorkshire Water land and the valuation of the Council-owned land. These details had not been shared with anyone in the public domain.

The Mayor suggested Councillor Cutts have a private discussion with Councillor Yasseen regarding this matter after this meeting.

**(28) Councillor Carter** asked could the Deputy Leader explain why he recently wrote that funds for a new Waverley school were being released as originally planned when the Cabinet approved changes in 2014 delaying the release of funds until 40% more houses were built, leading to a delay in building the school.

Councillor Watson confirmed that whilst the original plan in 2014 was approved a downturn in the economy meant the properties on the Waverley estate were not selling as quickly as intended and as such in 2014 the principal developers at the Waverley development requested a ‘deed of variation’ to the original Section 106 of the Town and Country



Planning Act financial agreement to the number of properties being occupied, which had resulted in more apartments than houses being built which had been occupied at the same time as the houses would have been. This meant the 2020 opening date for the school would still be hit and in the interim this Council had approved the extension to other schools in the catchment to accommodate the children from Waverley.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter referred to the frustration of residents at Waverley and the delay in having to travel quite far to a school and asked if the Council could pledge to bring the school building project forward.

Councillor Watson explained the Council had no control of the building of the school and a 2020 completion date was anticipated. An independent panel had also been established which included residents of the Waverley estate. A recommendation would have to be made to the Regional Schools' Commission as to which academy would be appointed to allow the school to be built.

**(29) Councillor B. Cutts** referred to the bus station and Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2016 - Question 5 and then again on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 - Question 4 regarding the repair for the sum of £10 million. He explained how in a casual conversation with people of understanding and knowledge they fell about laughing at a suggested repair fee of £10 million when it was expected to be under £1 million and he asked how could this situation come about, or was there another agenda?

Councillor Lelliott explained there were two separate issues regarding the Interchange. Firstly, the fire damage repairs of £1 million and then the concrete rot and refurbishment and upgrade to the Interchange. The total cost estimate for the project was currently £12.6M.

This cost included for repairs to the multi-storey car park, and the fire damage, together with refurbishment and temporary facilities that would need to be provided on the highway whilst the works were being undertaken. The responsibility lay with SYPTE to design the repair/refurbishment works and engage a contractor to implement them some time in October, 2017.

In a supplementary question Councillor B. Cutts referred to the refurbishment and whether this related to the floor and the car park or the damage to the electrics. He confirmed he was not interested in the response as he had some correspondence, which he was happy to share with the Mayor, which indicated the Council wanted to relocate the interchange.

Councillor Lelliott restated that the £1 million for the fire damage when a bus caught fire would be through an insurance claim and the £10 million related to the refurbishment of the interchange. A direct link could be provided on when the details were approved and when it would commence.

**(30) Councillor Carter** referred to finding out last year that some of Rotherham's vulnerable looked after children had been sent as far away as Portsmouth for overnight care and asked how many of these children have been sent outside of the local authority area in the past three months?

Councillor Watson confirmed that in the period from the beginning of December, 2016 to the end of February, 2017 there have been eighteen placements made outside of Rotherham. This number represented 4% of the total looked after children population. Placements outside the local authority area were often essential, depending on each child's individual needs. It was quite normal, for example, to place a child at risk of CSE outside the area, whilst they worked with the authorities to bear witness against their abusers in court. In such circumstances, it is important to protect children from any intimidation at the hands of alleged perpetrators. In other cases, children may be placed out of area in specialist placements that were not available within the local authority boundary. That, said the Council's strategy was to place as many children locally as possible.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter referred to the 4% of looked after children and asked if the Deputy Leader was accepting that there should be fewer people going out or was this not the case.

Councillor Watson explained that over the three months eighteen children had been placed outside the borough. However, for historical reasons the percentage outside the borough was greater during the period when the Authority was not performing well. Young people currently placed outside the borough and doing well would not be moved, but over time the proportion of looked after children in Rotherham would steadily increase as the sufficiency strategy evolved.

**(31) Councillor B. Cutts** referred to two public town demonstrations on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2017 and asked who was responsible for the detailed programme and approval.

Councillor Read, the Leader, confirmed that the responsibility for the programme lay with South Yorkshire Police, the lead agency for dealing with the protests.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cutts asked again, whilst the Police were responsible for the programme, who approved it.

Councillor Read, the Leader, explained the Police and the demonstrators have to come to some agreement over the protest and the Police do that in consultation with other partners. However, the final approval of responsibility lay with the Police.

**(32) Councillor Carter** referred to Rotherham Councillors representing 3,125 voters on average. In Sheffield this number was 4,629. If Sheffield could manage to run one of the country's largest cities on this ratio, asked then why had Rotherham not reduced the number of Councillors accordingly?

The Leader explained that whilst comparisons between authorities could be useful in assisting the Local Government Boundary Commission for England determining an appropriate number of Councillors, the most important thing was about Councillors serving the interest of their communities and governance of the Council and having applied and met the test a small reduction in the number of Councillors had been agreed.

**(33) Councillor Carter** asked the Leader if he could please explain why the administration had made 123 staff redundant or retire early in this financial year and why this was necessary?

The Leader recognised the number of 123, but pointed out staffing had been reduced by 1700 since 2010 because the Government had enforced a long period of austerity, which included the people on Councillor Carter's election campaign.

**(34) Councillor Carter** asked how much has been spent on paying for B&Bs or hotels as emergency housing solutions in the last financial year?

Councillor Beck confirmed during 2015/2016, there was £2,269 spent to pay for rent in advance to secure bedsits to help single homeless people. The bedsits were linked to a hotel and are let on a six month assured short hold tenancy basis.

Only single homeless people who have approached Key Choices and have no other housing options available to them were referred to these bedsits.