

**COUNCIL MEETING
18th October, 2017**

Present:- The Mayor of Rotherham (Councillor Eve Rose Keenan) (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Albiston, Allcock, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Bird, Buckley, Carter, Clark, Cooksey, Cowles, D. Cutts, Elliot, R. Elliott, Ellis, Evans, Fenwick-Green, Hoddinott, Jepson, Jones, Lelliott, McNeely, Mallinder, Marles, Marriott, Napper, Price, Read, Reeder, Rushforth, Sansome, Senior, Sheppard, Short, Simpson, Steele, Taylor, John Turner, Julie Turner, Tweed, Walsh, Watson, Williams, Wilson, Wyatt and Yasseen.

68. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported she had attended 81 engagements since the last Council meeting, but wished to highlight in particular World Mental Health Day which involved readings and an act from the Yellow Wallpaper Play by representatives from RDash and Open Minds on 10th October, 2017.

The Town Hall also played host to Black History Month this morning with ladies enjoying morning coffee and another event was scheduled for the 30th October, 2017 during half term week to encourage family participation.

The Daniel Barnett Foundation were also holding a Christmas Smiles event for terminally ill children at the Town Hall involving artists and musicians during December, 2017 and Member involvement was encouraged.

69. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brookes, Cusworth, B. Cutts, M. Elliott, Hague, Ireland, Jarvis, Khan, Pitchley, Russell, Vjestica and Whysall.

70. COMMUNICATIONS

Further to Minute No. 60 of the meeting of the Cabinet and Commissioners held on 16th October, 2017, the Mayor confirmed the recommendation for Council approval on this agenda for the Swinton Town Centre Redevelopment.

71. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 13th September, 2017, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

72. PETITIONS

The Mayor reported that 2 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:-

- Containing 24 signatures requesting the Strategic Director of Adult Care and Housing to undertake meaningful consultation with the adult victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation
- Child A and Elizabeth addressed the Council as part of the presentation of the petition requesting the Strategic Director of Adult Care and Housing to undertake meaningful consultation with the adult victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation.
- Containing 1,000 signatures requesting that Cedar House be kept open.

Mrs. S. Thackery was unable to be present to address the Council, but this petition would be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board having met the threshold for debate.

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(1) Councillors Hoddinott and Read declared personal interests in Minute No. 78 (Swinton Town Centre Redevelopment) on the grounds of a relative living close-by to the proposals and would not take part in the debate or vote.

(2) Councillor Atkin declared a personal interest in Minute No. 85 (Motion – Fracking) as Chair of the Planning Board and would not take part in the debate or vote.

(3) Councillor D. Cutts declared a personal interest in Minute No. 85 (Motion – Fracking) as a member of the Planning Board and would not take part in the debate or vote.

(4) Councillor Ellis declared a personal interest in Minute No. 85 (Motion – Fracking) on the grounds that her partner worked in the renewable energy industry and would not take part in the debate or vote.

74. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr. P. Thirlwall referred to a question he had raised at the Cabinet and Commissioners' Meeting on the 16th October, 2017 regarding the 50 word question limit for Council as part of a review of Standing Orders, which on reflection, he had raised at the Council meeting on the 8th March, 2017 and asked for this to be taken forward.

In coming to the question submitted he was aware that remuneration for Members with special responsibilities was recommended by the 'Independent Remuneration Panel' and approved by Council and asked could the Leader explain why Members receiving special responsibility allowances have to be named and approved by Council when they have in fact already been chosen by you or Labour Group?

The Leader explained the procedure in respect of Members' Allowances was governed by the Local Authorities (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 which detailed provisions for the establishment of an Independent Remuneration Panel, which was principally responsible for recommending a Members' Allowances Scheme to the Council. In determining how to set the level of Members' Allowances, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Both the law and the Council's own Procedure Rules required the Council to appoint members to committees and to elect Chairs and Vice-Chairs. This provision was enshrined in the Local Government Act 1972. Having considered the political composition of the authority, the Council received nominations from political groups for the positions available and appointments were agreed on the basis of those nominations. It should be noted that special responsibility allowances were paid to members of the Labour Group and the UKIP group for the Leader of the Opposition

The rules in respect of the appointment of members to the Council's executive, known as Cabinet in Rotherham, were different. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 saw the introduction of a 'Strong Leader and Cabinet' model of governance. Following the Governance Review approved by the Council in 2016, Rotherham adopted this model of governance. Under this system, all executive power was invested in the Leader of the Council, including the determination of the size and composition of the Cabinet, which was reported into Council.

In a supplementary question the member of the public asked without a minute naming a person was the payment of a special responsibility allowance ultra vires? If this was the case why was the Leader of the Opposition not mentioned in the Council minutes at the Annual General Meeting, nor had any Leader of the Opposition who had received an allowance ever been named. How was Councillor Cowles confirmed and paid if he was not named in the minutes and if this was ultra vires would proceedings be sought for the recovery of the monies paid to all Leaders of the Opposition since 1974.

The Leader endeavoured to investigate this matter further regarding the naming of Leaders of the Opposition, but was confident Councillor Cowles was the Leader of the Opposition.

A response to this matter would be provided to the member of the public in writing.

75. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That under section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting should the appendices be discussed for Minute No. 78 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

76. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader welcomed the opportunity to address the Council and was pleased to report the new procedure for receiving scrutiny review reports to give members of scrutiny the recognition for the work they carried out.

77. 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 11th September, 2017, be received.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

78. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - SWINTON TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT - DEVELOPMENT BRIEF AND ACQUISITION OF INTEGRAL SITE

Further to Minute No. 60 of the meeting of the Cabinet and Commissioners held on 16th October, 2017 consideration was given to the request to acquire the integral site forming part of the redevelopment and to include the scheme in the Capital Programme.

Details of the indicative costs regarding the proposals were set out in detail as part of the exempt appendices to the report.

Resolved:- That the acquisition of the integral site forming part of the redevelopment site, on the basis outlined in Exempt Appendix E, be approved, subject to the agreement of satisfactory terms, and that this acquisition is added to the Council's Capital Programme 2017/18

Mover:- Councillor Sansome

Seconder:- Councillor Wyatt

79. RECOMMENDATION FROM STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE - REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

Consideration was given to the report which detailed recommendations from the Standards and Ethics Committee for the adoption of a revised procedure for considering complaints alleging a failure to comply with the Members' Code of Conduct within Rotherham Borough Council.

There was provision at paragraph 36 of the procedure whereby the Complaints Hearing Sub-Committee would meet in public to consider the Monitoring Officer's report in respect of the complaint.

Resolved:- That the revised Procedure for Considering Complaints Alleging a Failure to Comply with the Members' Code of Conduct within Rotherham Borough Council be approved.

Mover:- Councillor McNeely

Seconder:- Councillor Allen

80. AUTHORISATION OF OFFICERS TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL IN MAGISTRATES COURT PROCEEDINGS AND THE DELEGATION OF THE POWER TO AUTHORISE OFFICERS TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES

Consideration was given to the report which sought authorisation from the Council under Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972, for two newly recruited Technical Officers to the Council's Account Management Team to appear in the Magistrates' Court on behalf of the Council.

In order to efficiently deal with similar issues in the future and avoid delay, the report also sought delegation to the Assistant Director of Legal Services to authorise officers to appear in the Magistrates' Court on behalf of the Council in the future.

Resolved:- (1) That Sean Beesley and Martin Selman be authorised under Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972 to prosecute, defend or appear in proceedings on behalf of the Council in the Magistrates' Court.

(2) That the power to authorise Council officers under Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972 to prosecute, defend or appear in proceedings on behalf of the Council be delegated to the Assistant Director of Legal Services.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

81. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES, PANELS AND BOARDS

Consideration was given to the proposed changes to the membership of committees, panels and boards.

Resolved:- (1) That Councillor Julie Turner replace Councillor Napper on Improving Lives Select Commission.

(2) That Councillor Ireland replace Councillor Allcock on Improving Lives Select Commission, leaving a vacancy for the Labour Group on Health Select Commission.

82. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY UPDATE

Councillor Brian Steele, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, provided an overview of the work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the 3 Select Commissions during the last few months, outlined the pre-scrutiny decision making process and the decisions taken and gave a further update on the work of each of the Commissions in turn.

Members involved in the role of scrutiny were thanked for their involvement and the challenge as part of the process.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the update noted.

Mover:- Councillor Steele

Seconder:- Councillor Cowles

83. SCRUTINY REVIEW - ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN ROTHERHAM

Consideration was given to the report which shared the findings and latest analysis and current thinking of the Improving Lives Select Commission's cross-party review group on the range of Alternative Management Arrangements (AMAs) for Children's Services. It evaluated the relative strengths and challenges of the primary options available to the Council and suggested initial recommendations for future management arrangements.

The review concluded that a Practice Partner model would secure the most rapid and sustainable improvements in the short term (2 years) and present the lowest risk to the Improvement journey. In particular, its evidence suggested that the Practice Partner model would:-

- Establish the right balance of political ownership, oversight and accountability for CYPS at the same time as rigorous external challenge.
- Enable the good progress being made on the improvement programme to continue at an accelerated pace with minimal disruption to partners, wider council priorities or management focus.
- Avoid high transition and operating costs associated with each of the AMAs and enable spend to be focused on front line delivery.

It was acknowledged that the peer practice partner model was by definition temporary. Once there was consistent good quality front-line practice, the Council would actively consider other options to work with others through integration, collaboration or further commissioning if this would secure more rapid and sustainable improvement.

The Cabinet and Commissioners would be required to respond formally to the recommendations and indicate agreement or otherwise, what action, would be taken to implement the recommendations, along with details of timescales and accountabilities.

Members welcomed the report and congratulated all those involved in the review and its recommendations.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and recommendations in respect of alternative management arrangements for Children's Services in Rotherham, as outlined in Section 11 of Appendix 1, be noted.

(2) That the response of Cabinet and Commissioners be fed back to Improving Lives Select Commission.

Mover:- Councillor Clark

Seconder:- Councillor Allcock

84. SCRUTINY REVIEW - EMERGENCY PLANNING

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the findings from a cross-party scrutiny review into the Emergency Planning process for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. The existing Emergency Plan was considered to be out of date and called into question its resilience and was a determining factor for undertaking the review.

Details of the methodology to the review and the visits undertaken were outlined, further assisted by the experience of a live incident during the review period.

Members thanked those involved with the review and would take forward the recommended training, which would be arranged in due course.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and recommendations in respect of Emergency Planning be noted.

(2) That the response of Cabinet and Commissioners be fed back to Improving Places Select Commission.

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Seconder:- Councillor Mallinder

85. NOTICE OF MOTION - FRACKING

Proposed by Councillor Beck and seconded by Councillor Wilson

That this Council notes:-

- With concern that the Government has made fracking a central plank of the UK's energy policy.
- That a number of exploratory licences have been granted across the North of England, including covering a large part of the Rotherham borough.
- That in areas where exploratory drilling is under consideration, local residents have expressed concern.
- That the Labour Party manifesto at the 2017 General Election included a clear commitment to ban fracking.
- That UKIP's 2015 election manifesto declared it's "time to get 'fracking'" and that "UKIP supports the development of shale gas..." UKIP's 2017 manifesto stated that "UKIP will invest in shale gas exploration."
- That all planning applications relating to fracking must be considered on their merits in planning terms, within the rules set out by the Government.

That this Council, therefore:-

- a) Regrets the decision of the then Liberal Democrat Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Ed Davey, to lift the national ban on fracking in 2012.
- b) Commits to not allow any fracking activities, including survey work, on Council owned or controlled land and property.

Councillor Carter proposed and Councillor Jepson seconded the following amendment for the motion to now read:-

That this Council notes:-

- With concern that the Government has made fracking a central plank of the UK's energy policy.
- That a number of exploratory licences have been granted across the North of England, including covering a large part of the Rotherham borough.
- That in areas where exploratory drilling is under consideration, local residents have expressed concern.

- That all planning applications relating to fracking must be considered on their merits in planning terms, within the rules set out by the government.

That this Council, therefore:-

- a) Regrets the decision of the Government to make fracking a central part of the UK's energy policy.
- b) Commits to not allow any fracking activities, including survey work, on Council owned or controlled land and property.
- c) Pledges to write to the Government and local MPs asking them to lobby for changes to the UK's energy policy to invest more money in renewable energy technologies and ban fracking.
- d) Pledges to not sell council land or property to companies involved in fracking.

On being put to the vote the amendment to the motion was put and LOST.

On being put to the vote, the substantive motion was carried.

86. NOTICE OF MOTION - INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS

Proposed by Councillor Read and seconded by Councillor Watson

This Council notes:-

1. The publication of independent reports on Wednesday 6th September 2017 into issues raised by Professor Jay's 2014 report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham over the period between 1997 and 2013.
2. With great disappointment that the reports were unable to recommend disciplinary action or sanctions relating to the pensions of any former or current member of staff at Rotherham Borough Council, relating to the failings at the council between 1997 and 2013.
3. That the Leader of the Council has subsequently written to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to ask him to consider the iniquity of the current law, under which senior managers can oversee systematic failures of public services seemingly without consequences, if they leave their jobs before those failings are exposed.
4. That the Independent Police Complaints Commission continue to formally examine allegations of misconduct against 30 police officers during the time period covered by the Jay Report.

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5. That the National Crime Agency continue to pursue criminal investigations relating to the period covered by the Jay Report, the largest ever criminal investigation into non-recent child sexual exploitation in the UK.
6. That significant progress has been made since the publication of the Jay Report in Rotherham, resulting in 30 perpetrators of child sexual exploitation offences being sentenced to a total of more than 350 years in prison.

The Council, therefore, resolves to:-

1. Express our deep sorrow for the failings of the past within the Council, and to continue to prioritise dealing with child sexual exploitation.
2. Ensure that the new Senior Leadership Team of the Council take responsibility for ensuring the recommendations of the September 6th reports are followed through.
3. Recognise the bravery of Rotherham's child sexual exploitation survivors and their families, who were so badly let down.
4. Continue to support all efforts to bring perpetrators of child sexual exploitation, and any professional who colluded in such abuse or otherwise engaged in any other related criminal activity, to justice.
5. Make formal representation to the Home Office with regards to the "Fusion Bid" for additional essential financial support to ensure that survivors of child sexual exploitation in Rotherham have the best possible support during forthcoming criminal trials of alleged perpetrators.
6. Condemn unequivocally those former members of staff and Elected Members of the Council who declined to take part in the independent investigations that reported on September 6th; their unwillingness to try to help survivors to seek justice is utterly unacceptable.
7. Make formal representation to the Government in order to ensure that new guidelines to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board make it clear that a child under the age of 16 cannot consent to their own abuse; it is not acceptable that victims of child sexual exploitation offences have been refused compensation for this apparent reason.

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

87. NOTICE OF MOTION - PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Proposed by Councillor Cowles and seconded by Councillor Jepson

This Council wishes to show both solidarity and support with the victims of CSE, their families and the wider general public of Rotherham in requesting the following:

That the Prime Minister should without delay authorise a full public inquiry to be conducted by an agreed independent body of the period covered by the Jay Report into CSE. This inquiry should have the authority to investigate all persons from all functions and departments both public and private sector, in order to identify those who were aware of what was taking place and who took little or no action to prevent further harm to victims and to make them both responsible and accountable for their actions.

Councillor Read proposed and Councillor Watson seconded an amendment for the motion to replace the words in the second paragraph "... without delay authorise ..." with the word "consider".

On being put to the vote, the amendment was accepted by the Council and became the substantive motion.

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

88. 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 Allen

89. AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Seconder:- Councillor Walsh

90. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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

Mover:- Councillor Roche

Seconder:- Councillor Mallinder

91. PLANNING BOARD

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

Mover:- Councillor Atkin

Seconder:- Councillor Tweed

92. LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE

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

Mover:- Councillor Ellis

Seconder:- Councillor Beaumont

93. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

There were none.

94. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN

(1) Councillor Simpson asked could RMBC add to his request to the Transport Board for a feasibility study of a cable car from Waverley to Sheffield especially linked to park and ride and other areas?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the Council was developing a business case which sought to identify connectivity improvements to and from Waverley and the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District. This included walking, cycling and sustainable transport.

In terms of the cable car the Cabinet Member would ask the Transport Section to take a look at the scheme but wider these schemes were typically expensive and may not demonstrate value for money.

In a supplementary question Councillor Simpson was aware this issue had gone to second stage to try and get some funding. He hoped the Council could be positive about new forms of transport especially things like cable cars which have provided successful in other countries as a commuting mechanism, which not only assisted congestion, but tourism and could be implemented in such schemes, for example Gullivers.

Councillor Lelliott had used similar transport systems abroad and agreed connectivity was the key and the aspirations, but the costs associated with cable car technology and the success of such schemes within the UK were expensive and limited.

(2) Councillor Carter asked why was it that 13 roads in the Leader's Ward were scheduled to be repaired in the next year, whereas only 4 roads in Brinsworth and Catcliffe ward were scheduled for repair?

Councillor Hoddinott advised the Leader took road repairs very seriously and if Councillor Carter had attended the highways seminar last week he would see £50 million was being invested on roads over 5 years locally. There was only seven road repairs in the Leader's Ward, 8 in the Sitwell Ward, 19 in Aston and Woodsetts and 14 in Rother Vale.

Roads were assessed by officers to a set criteria. There were more plans for Brinsworth this year, but in order to minimise disruption to residents these rolled forward to next year due to works with Virgin Media. Residents of Brinsworth would see the benefit of Labour's investment in roads over the next few years.

(3) Councillor Mallinder asked if she could have a progress report on the community allotments in Dinnington.

Councillor Hoddinott thanked Councillor Mallinder and local residents for raising the issue of the Victoria Street allotments and working together to address some of the issues. Some improvement had been made including:-

- Formal notices being served on allotment plot owners, which had resulted in waste being cleared and fencing erected to prevent further fly-tipping. The exception being however, that fencing to the community allotment was still awaited, but it was anticipated this would be a start date would be confirmed by the end of this week.
- Conifers have been cut back along the footpath that ran across the back of the Victoria Street allotments following enforcement action against the owners. This had allowed more light onto the footpath and allotments.
- A range of warnings have been issued to landlords and tenants on Leicester Road, Scarsdale Street and Victoria Street, to tackle fly-tipping, accumulations of waste and housing safety. Whilst most landlords and tenants have complied, 7 fines have been issued to landlords on Leicester Road together with action being taken for breaches of Selective Licensing.
- Joint patrols have been organised with the Police on a weekly basis around the allotments and neighbouring streets to ensure continued action and a sustainable approach.

Progress was pleasing and tribute was paid to the Ward Councillors and local residents for their support and it was hoped that the progress made would be maintained.

(4) Councillor Cowles asked, with reference to the recent CSE reports, who from the Council agreed the 'Terms of Reference' for the investigations with the interim Chief Executive and in particular for the Gowlings report?

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The Leader confirmed the Terms of Reference were agreed by the Interim Chief Executive, Jan Ormondroyd, in consultation with the former Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Jacqueline Collins.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles asked, even though Councillor Read was not Leader at the time, how soon after he became Leader was he aware the reports had been commissioned.

The Leader confirmed he was aware of the reports being commissioned as he was present in the Council Meeting when the then Leader, Paul Lakin, asked for them. It would have been some time after that he became aware they had been commissioned as external pieces of work.

(5) Councillor Carter referred to the fantastic news that Clifton Park had been named as one of the nation's best parks and was sure everyone would agree that everyone deserved a fantastic winning local park within walking distance. He asked could the Cabinet Member explain the plans to do this now the new officer was in post?

Councillor Yasseen explained Rotherham residents were fortunate to access a number of parks across the Borough of high quality green spaces. It was an honour for Clifton Park and for Rotherham to be recognised by public vote across Yorkshire.

However, in times of Tory damaging austerity maintaining the quality and standards of all parks across the Borough meant the Council had to work in more innovative ways and one such partnership with Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust across 4 pilot areas was to encourage local residents to become involved with parks and green spaces and take greater ownership.

(6) Councillor Allock was unable to ask his question so in accordance with the procedure would receive a response in writing.

(7) Councillor Napper asked what was the Council's policy with regards to parking on double yellow lines in the town?

Councillor Lelliott advised the Council has a duty to undertake parking enforcement activities under the auspices of the Traffic Management Act 2004. The Council's Civil Enforcement Officers undertook enforcement action, including yellow line contraventions where Traffic Regulation Orders were in place in the Town Centre.

Penalty Charge Notices were issued where appropriate, however, observation times were taken into consideration where loading and unloading was permitted.

The aim was to maintain and improve the free and safe flow of traffic, thereby making Rotherham a more pleasant and safe place for all highway users.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper referred to the double yellow lines and the indiscriminate parking on Wellgate directly under the traffic lights near the turn off with Hollowgate. He also referred to direct flaunting after 5.00 p.m. on both Westgate and Fitzwilliam Road and asked if Enforcement Officers could patrol after 5.00 p.m. in these areas.

Councillor Lelliott advised extra patrols of the Enforcement Officers activities did take place. On Wellgate action had been taken to remove and clamp offending vehicles. The Cabinet Member gave her assurance that indiscriminate parking was taken seriously and some measures had been placed on Wellgate to stop such activity. Work would continue with the Highway Enforcement Team under difficult circumstances, especially when it came to issuing tickets and the difficulties encountered when vehicles had no registered keeper.

(8) Councillor Cowles asked who acted as the project manager facing off to the consultants throughout the process, in particular for the Gowlings investigation?

The Leader explained there was no one person as project manager, but there were main points of contact:-

- Gowling WLG report - initially the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Stuart Fletcher, and one of the Human Resources Managers, Simon Cooper, and following the departure of the Human Resources Manager, the Monitoring Officer and the Deputy Monitoring Officer.
- Weightman report - initially the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Stuart Fletcher, and one of the Human Resources Managers, Simon Cooper, and following the departure of the Human Resources Manager, the Monitoring Officer and the Deputy Monitoring Officer.
- Internal Audit – The then Assistant Director for Audit, ICT and Procurement and after his departure the Head of Internal Audit.
- A to O report – the then Human Resources Manager, Simon Cooper.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles asked if the Leader ever personally attended any of the update meetings or did he rely solely on these people to monitor progress.

The Leader confirmed he had not attended the meetings with report authors, but was dependent upon the updates on progress from officers.

(9) Councillor Carter referred to earlier this year when assurances were given of a review into waste management and the possibility of plastic being recycled at the kerbside and asked for an update on progress made here and whether residents could look forward to kerbside plastic recycling in the near future.

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Councillor Hoddinott advised the waste collection service review was progressing and a report would be presented to Cabinet in November.

The unique BDR plant at Manvers was removing plastics included in residents' domestic waste during processing as part of the waste diversion operation which was sent for re-use. The plant had recycled 10,000 tonnes of plastic since commissioning.

Members did have the opportunity to visit the site and look how waste was treated.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked if there was any literature, videos or media that could be shown to residents in the interim period.

Councillor Hoddinott agreed there was a need to promote the plant activity and the good work and had asked if a video could be produced on how plastic being recycled. However, the recycling process was within an enclosed box, so any video material would be limited. Huge progress had made over the last 16 years when only 3% of waste was recycled as opposed to now 40% moving towards 50%, but more could be done.

(10) Councillor Cowles asked was it the internal project manager who was responsible for reporting the progress made and was it then them who authorised invoices for payment?

The Leader confirmed officers with the point of contact roles reported on progress. They then checked invoices and payment was authorised by the Monitoring Officer, and his predecessors in that role.

(11) Councillor Napper confirmed he was involved in this matter, to which he declared, as it related to the use of Urban Green Space land for charity events. He asked if the Council thought charging £11.00 per hour and £15.50 administration fee was fair?

Councillor Yasseen confirmed fees and charges for events organised by charities and community groups were very reasonable and necessary to allow for the provision of the required level of service.

The Council was facing a budget gap of £42 million and if it did not charge for the use of some of its green spaces or for its assets it would not make any inroad to responding to the cuts.

The fees only partially cover the costs for work including site inspection, litter picking, site reinstatement, issue and processing of application forms, checking risk assessments, insurance and other documentation, providing advice and guidance, and query handling. Comparable charges made by other local authorities included £61 administration fee at Doncaster, compared to Rotherham's £15.50. Sheffield was a £60 minimum hire charge, Kirklees a minimum of £53.

Members were encouraged to use their devolved budget through the Community Leadership Fund for this type of purpose and utilise it to support communities and engage activity in the Ward.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper confirmed the fees had been paid to the Council, but asked once it was confirmed the land was not Council-owned would the fees and administration fee paid be reimbursed.

Councillor Yasseen confirmed the land in question was in the process of transferring to the Council and where there had been an error a reimbursement would be made.

(12) Councillor Carter asked when would construction of the new library in Brinsworth commence?

Councillor Yasseen suggested, as she had done previously, that Councillor Carter make links with the Parish Council as essentially this was their development and the library was connected to their Community Hub development. Demolition of the existing Community Hall commenced on 16th October, 2017 and the Parish Council have proposed that works commence early in the New Year for the library to be open by Summer 2018.

(13) Councillor Cowles asked if the Leader was ever concerned about the length of time taken, that the bill was growing and, that it was evident from an early stage that senior people had left the organisation and could not be held to account for their lack of intervention?

The Leader became increasingly concerned about the length of time for the reports and less concerned about the cost of the work as this needed to be completed. Towards the end of the process the Leader had asked for update on the progress, but due to the legal work required around the publication of the reports the end date had been uncertain.

(14) Councillor Carter asked would the Council be in favour of further Supertram expansion to other areas of Rotherham?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed extensions to the Tram Train network offered the opportunity to considerably enhance the public transport network and provide a step change in accessibility. However, the Council did not have any further developments under consideration at the moment.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked about the difficulties in engaging people in the town centre and asked what current plans were being used to get residents into the town centre.

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Councillor Lelliott explained about the content within the Town Centre Masterplan, the improved work near the interchange and the parade along with works to the tram train and pedestrian links and working closely with businesses and the proposed developments within the Master Plan to look at opportunities for tendering.

(15) Councillor Cowles asked, given that it was evident from an early stage that the terms of reference for the Gowlings Report were limited to this organisation and that other organisations needed to be involved, did the Leader never feel that it was time to draw stumps in favour of a wider brief?

The Leader confirmed he did not and still maintained that had he intervened to change the Terms of Reference, this would have cast a shadow on the whole process.

(16) Councillor Carter asked how was the Leader going to rebuild trust in the Sheffield City Region project following the catastrophic breakdown in relationship between the 4 South Yorkshire boroughs?

The Leader could not describe the breakdown in communications as catastrophic, but a difference of opinion on the devolution deal. The 4 South Yorkshire Councils continued to work on the economic development activity across the Sheffield City Region which brought employment and financial benefits to Rotherham. He would continue to pursue these as long as he could.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter referred to Rotherham missing out on £30 million investment and having to fund the bill for a new almost powerless Elected Mayor in May, 2018 and asked the Leader if he would review his position within the region and his leadership role in the Council.

The Leader confirmed he would not, but would continue to seek the benefits for Rotherham under the existing arrangements for the Sheffield City Region or continue to pursue options under a further devolution deal.

(17) Councillor Napper asked, now the Government had set up a group to look at taxi licensing laws and set up a minimum standard, would the Leader write to the L.G.A. Chairman of Safety and Stronger Communities Board, Councillor Simon Blackburn, and suggest that the group look at Rotherham's Taxi Licensing Policy?

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed she had already been in touch with the group and they had a copy of the taxi licensing policy. She had actually met Councillor Blackburn, Chair of the LGA Board, and they were fully aware of the work in Rotherham.

The Local Government Association had hosted several regional seminars where Rotherham Councillors, and Officers, have provided details of these enhancements to other Councils throughout the country, which had been widely acknowledged. The Council should take every opportunity to push the Government to adopt Rotherham's policy and standards and ensure CCTV in all taxis across the country.

(18) Councillor Carter asked at the last meeting the Cabinet Member stated "great swathes" of Greenbelt land would be reclassified so that developers could be free to build there and asked what assurances could this Council give that they will protect our countryside?

Councillor Lelliott explained every local authority had to produce a Local Plan. If they did not the Government would produce one for them instead.

When embarking on the Local Plan process, Rotherham was successful in renegotiating its housing number from 20,000 new properties to 14,000. The Local Plan was currently under inspection and would be finalised by September, 2018.

Whilst it was acknowledged that Rotherham's Local Plan would release some Green Belt land for development, this had been kept to a minimum, amounting to around 2% of the current Green Belt, but also allowed a realistic target for future growth to be met.

(19) Councillor Carter asked how did the Council think we should reduce congestion around Junction 33 and 34 of the M1?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed that, through the Department for Transport's Local Large Majors Fund, the Council was developing a business case which sought to identify what highway improvements were required to minimise congestion at Junction 33 and 34 and working in partnership with Sheffield City Council.

In addition, the Council was also developing a business case for the A630 widening between the Catcliffe Interchange and the M1 at J33. This scheme would widen the highway to 3 lanes in each direction, providing more capacity for this strategic link with the priority objective to reduce congestion.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked if one of the options being considered was the opening of Wood Lane in Brinsworth or any routes through the village to open the junction and reduce congestion and asked if this was something the Council was in favour of.

Councillor Lelliott advised that officers would explore all options.

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(20) Councillor Carter asked about the number of new sets of traffic lights which had to be switched off within days because they were unfit for purpose and asked what steps were being taken to ensure this would not happen again?

Councillor Lelliott advised the traffic lights at Poplar Way Roundabout, Catcliffe, were carried out by the developer of the Waverley site and did not operate correctly at first. As soon as this was understood, the developer was able to resolve the problem, with support from Council officers.

The new traffic lights at the junction of A618 with the A57 was a very different scenario, but have not performed as expected. Having monitored the junction, the signals on the roundabout have been turned off to undertake a full review of the situation. Officers have investigated all aspects of the scheme and were in the process of understanding the reasons behind the event which in this case were focused on exit blocking from the roundabout and how this had been modelled. Once this was fully understood then appropriate mitigation measures would be developed.

Clearly lessons were learnt by all parties on the Catcliffe Waverley development, and any new issues that came from further understanding of the A618/A57 would be recorded to prevent a reoccurrence in any future schemes of this nature.

95. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.