

**COUNCIL MEETING
4th September, 2019**

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

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

230. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor was also pleased to present her activity since the last Council meeting which was attached for information to the Mayor's letter.

The Mayor drew attention to various events she and the Mayoress had attended both in Rotherham and Sheffield, including Yorkshire Day and the Cadets Association for Yorkshire and Humber.

The Mayor also highlighted forthcoming events with:-

- Rotherham Show this coming weekend on 7th and 8th September.
- Ladies's Day at Hellaby Hall in aid of the Mayor's charity on 12th September.
- RMBC Garden Competition awards ceremony at Clifton Park on 18th September.
- Pride of Rotherham Awards on 27th September.

231. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckley, Price, Russell, Senior, Simpson, Whysall and Yasseen.

232. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications received.

233. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 24th July, 2019, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

234. PETITIONS

The Mayor reported receipt of two petitions, which had not met the threshold for consideration by Council, and would be referred to the relevant directorate for a response to be prepared:-

- Containing 100 signatures calling on the Council to include the Grange Estate in the 2021 Resurfacing Programme due to the number of complaints about potholes, blocked gullies, broken road surfaces and loose gravel.

Councillor Short addressed the Council as part of the presentation of the petition.

- Containing 26 signatures calling on the Council to suspend the recent changes to the petition scheme and fully consult with members of the public, specifically those who have used the petition scheme over the past two years, and carry out an equality impact assessment on any proposed changes before implementing any further changes.

Mr. Harron addressed the Council as part of the presentation of the petition.

235. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

236. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(1) Mr. Harron asked since the Jay Report in August 2014, how many gold group investigations into services had RMBC either initiated, or participated in, because of complaints about either commissioned services, non-commissioned services or any RMBC services?

The Leader confirmed “Gold” was a term and a command hierarchy used for major operations or issues within and across public services. A Gold Group was used to formulate the strategy for dealing with the operation and responding to issues in a strategic fashion in relation to those instigated with complaints against services either the Council commissioned or provided directly and since the Jay Report there had been one such organised investigation.

In a supplementary question Mr. Harron asked the Leader if he could explain broadly the nature of the threat or why such that a Gold Group investigation was set up.

The Leader explained that in broader terms there were a number of complaints overlapping and inter-related complaints of a serious nature which would fall within the remit of different organisations to investigate.

In this case it related to one supplier of services and at that point in time it was decided that the best way to co-ordinate an investigation was to run that through a Gold structure.

(2) **Elizabeth** was unable to attend the meeting so would be provided with a written response to her question.

(3) **Mr. Cawkwell** was unable to attend the meeting so would be provided with a written response to his question.

(4) **Mr. Thirlwall** asked could the Leader please tell him who was the Leader of the official Opposition Party in the Council, which political party he/she represented, how many Opposition members there were in that group and how much the Leader of the Opposition received in Special Responsibility Allowance.

The Leader confirmed Councillor Allen Cowles was leader of the main Opposition group – the Brexit Party Group and he himself was a member, as per the notification provided to the Proper Officer on the formation of that group in July, 2019. The Brexit Party Group consisted of eleven Members.

In addition, the Members' Allowances Scheme had set the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Main Opposition Party at £8,617 and Councillor Cowles had, therefore, been in receipt of the allowance since May, 2016.

As part of a supplementary question Mr. Thirlwall having looked at the Register of Interests late last week all eleven of those Members were still listed as being in the UKIP Party.

Miraculously when he looked yesterday the majority had changed to the Brexit Party. This question had been raised on three separate occasions since October, 2018 and as Leader it was made clear that the responsibility for completing the Register of Interest was the individual Councillor and no one could do it on their behalf.

On this basis who gave the instruction to alter the Register of interests in the last couple of days, when was it completed, was it altered without the proper authorisation of the individual Councillor, which was gross misconduct by an officer of the Council. If this was the case whereby instructions to delete those amendments must be made thus reverting those Members back to the UKIP Party.

The Leader was, therefore, then asked if he would be referring those Councillors to the Standards and Ethics Committee because they had not completed their Register of Interests within twenty-eight days. Finally would the Leader be seeking to recover the £8,000 Special Responsibility Allowance because it would appear that Councillor Cowles was a member of the Brexit Party, but the other eleven were not.

The Leader confirmed Mr. Thirlwall was quite right that the responsibility did lay with the individual Member to make sure their Register was updated. He was not aware there had been an instruction for them to change and had not been involved in any issues around this.

The Leader reiterated that for all Members if they were Members of a Political Party then those should be declared. If it was believed a Register of Interest had been tampered with without permission he encouraged Members to come forward, but was not aware of any evidence to suggest that this was the case.

However, if it was proven that a Member had not updated their Register of Interests within the mandatory twenty-eight days then this was certainly something that could be reported to the Standards and Ethics Committee.

The Leader agreed to confirm this in writing to Mr. Thirlwall at his request.

237. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, that should the Mayor deem if necessary the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that any items involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

238. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader wanted to share the early reports that pupils from across the Borough's sixteen secondary schools had achieved exceptional GCSE results. This was excellent news and of particular note was the achievements of some of Rotherham's students especially with **Billie Moss** (Aston Comp) who achieved ten Grade 9 (old A*) (one of the highest achievers across the country), **Stephen Cheshire** (Oakwood Comp) achieved seven Grade 9 (old A) and also sat his A Level Maths two years early gaining A*, **Goda Zabitaite** (Swinton Academy) achieved five Grade 9, two Grade 8 and one Grade 6 GCSE passes and **Alijah Mustafa** (Clifton Community School) achieved four Grade 9 and five Grade 8 GCSE passes.

Success had also been achieved by students across Rotherham who received their A-Level results seeing a 99% pass rate for the borough. Wath and Swinton scored the highest pass rates in the borough, with 100% of pupils passing their exams. Wath also had 86.5% of pupils achieving an A* – Grade C, and an impressive 36% of pupils graded A*–A.

It was impressive that the Looked After Children's results had also improved across all stages on last year.

In terms of Operation Stovewood there had been a further conviction of six men last week bringing the total number of convictions for historic CSE crimes in Rotherham to nearly forty. In partnership with the NCA the Council would continue to seek justice for all victims and survivors of CSE in Rotherham.

With regards to the HS2, the Prime Minister had requested a review of HS2 which would be carried out by Douglas Oakervee a retired engineer who previously chaired HS2 Ltd. and worked with the Prime Minister when he was London Mayor. The Leader along with Ros Jones, The Mayor of Doncaster, met with Doug Oakervee last night and points were made at a constructive meeting. Assurances were given that the voices of residents in Rotherham and Doncaster have been heard as part of that review.

Finally this week sees the return of the annual Rotherham Show which was set to be bigger and better than previous years marking the Show's 40th Anniversary and still the biggest free show in the North.

In the period where Members could ask questions of the Leader's statement, Councillor Carter echoed the comments about the Key Stage 4 and 5 results throughout the borough, but referred to the recent convictions arising from Operation Stovewood. It was Councillor Carter's understanding that in his judgement the Judge spoke harshly about the leadership of this Council and asked whereabouts on the spectrum would the Leader say that this Council was.

The Leader confirmed the Judge did comment harshly about the failures in the past in Rotherham which were severe and systematic over a long period of time. Rotherham would continue to live with the consequences of those actions. It was entirely understandable that those criticisms were made, but the Council was now a long way away from that situation today and would not be complacent about the threats to children and young people not just from CSE but in other exploitation. The Council knew it had to continue to provide the best services it could for people who were let down in the past and work was ongoing to deliver this into the future. In looking at the work to date, as reported on by Commissioners and independent observers, the Council demonstrated its progress and this was confirmed by the latest Ofsted report for Children's Services and would continue to progress in the future.

239. MINUTES OF THE CABINET

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8th July, 2019, be received.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

240. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Consideration was given to the report which set out in detail the Annual Report 2018/19 which brought together in one document a summary of the work undertaken by the Audit Committee. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) had issued guidance to local authorities to help ensure that Audit Committees operated effectively and the guidance recommended that Audit Committees should report annually on how they have discharged their responsibilities.

Copies of the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference for 2018/19 and 2019/20 were also included in the Appendix for information.

Resolved:- That the Audit Committee Annual Report 2018/19 be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Seconder:- Councillor Walsh

241. THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS - UPDATES FROM WARD COUNCILLORS

Further to Minute No. 55 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th November, 2018, consideration was given to the annual Ward Updates for Rotherham East, Rotherham West and Silverwood as part of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy.

The Strategy signalled a new way of working for the Council both for Members and for staff and covered every Ward in the borough delivered through Ward Plans developed with residents to address local issues and opportunities. Ward Members would be supported by the neighbourhood team and would work with officers and residents from a range of organisations to respond to residents.

Councillors Cooksey, Khan and Fenwick-Green, on behalf of the Rotherham East Ward, gave an update on their ward priorities.

Councillor Khan welcomed the change to the Thriving Neighbourhood initiative and the style of working. This had previously been echoed around the Chamber by other Ward Members. The Deputy Leader was, therefore, thanked for the neighbourhood initiative.

Ward Members had worked within the community to set up sessions with different groups and provide advice and support where required. This had worked really well and had been achieved across the whole Ward.

Ward Members specifically wanted to thank Council staff and the local PCSOs and the Police who worked tirelessly to forge working relationships and to ensure the communities were at the heart thus achieving a more collaborative approach.

This reaching out approach secured improvements and had made a difference to vulnerable groups that may not have been achieved previously. The Ward also had a Community Newsletter which was delivered to every household and community drop-in sessions where it was important to listen and advise.

Recognised achievements included the Eastwood Plan and working alongside a number of partners and partnerships, including various community centres, Mowbray Gardens Library, the Unity Centre, REMA and the Canal and River Trust where fantastic changes were made to open up fields thus making it more attractive for local wildlife.

Councillor Cooksey emphasised the need to listen to residents and consider their views when looking at any potential schemes for the devolved budget. It was only after listening to the concerns of local people about the poor state of St. Ann's underpass that the work of a local artist and illustrator was commissioned which improved the area. The completed murals celebrated famous Rotherham landmarks and residents from the past. This has also led to other commissions in other Wards.

This project also brought different groups together with help from the local youth club at My Place and the Red Cross as well as a Candidate Day in collaboration with Rotherham love where you live.

There had been some brilliant partnership working with partners and groups in Rotherham East Ward who have been so instrumental in providing assistance for other projects such as the mobile library and community hubs in East Dene and Herringthorpe which facilitated a number of diverse groups such as knit and natter, Rotherham Anglers, Polish/Anglo Polish; who consequently had written a book with fascinating stories of Polish immigrants after the Second World War which was also available to loan from the library. The library had also been mentioned in an academic paper in Malaysia which was about adult and community learning in England. One other project worthy of mention was the flourish programme, also held at the library highlighting mental health which was using creative methods such as writing and art to promote mental wellbeing. This was crucial in helping people to live their lives to the full.

Clifton Learning Partnership, a registered charity, also ran a community cafe and grew some of their own produce at the back of the centre. The charity worked hard with families in the area to try to address issues such as unemployment and poverty and Ward Members were pleased to be able to fund their adventure playground believing that play helped young children to develop.

In addition, over the summer the Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust had done some amazing work with local young volunteers to build an assault course with monkey bars, a barbecue area and a bee-friendly garden.

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St. Stephen's Neighbourhood Watch also received recognition from South Yorkshire Police and were presented with the Chief Inspector's Certificate for all their hard work dedication and commitment within the community. They were also supported through the Community Leadership Fund.

The Unity Centre, the home to many different groups, recently supported a coming together event for the Yemeni Community, jointly funded by Rotherham East and Boston Castle colleagues.

It was also pointed out that Ward Members would continue to work with the TARA at Bakersfield and the newly formed Springwell Gardens TARA.

Councillor Fenwick-Green echoed many of the comments of her Ward colleagues, but reiterated it had not been easy working in the Ward. Many of the issues identified by residents had led to positive improvements especially with newly installed cameras and lighting around Pocket Park, the removal of green debris, removal of dens that attracted anti-social behaviour and upskilling young people.

The National Trust had also been involved in the area with the installation of bat and bird boxes which the young people had enjoyed being involved in. There had also been some discussion about placing cameras in the boxes to link up with the new season.

Ward Members had also been instrumental in the development of a local scheme/competition asking people to look after their environment, which was progressing well and hopefully the message would get through.

Every effort was being made to involve the community in a number of projects and for them to take ownership and involve young people.

Moving on to the Rotherham West Ward Councillor Keenan described it as being as busy and vibrant with diverse areas and many places of worship, including Liberty Church who were involved with the food bank, the Mosque assisting with the curry night for Shiloh and St. Paul's who ran a community café.

She referred to various projects the Ward Councillors had been involved in, the recent picnic, the tremendous work undertaken by Shiloh, the homeless charity, and the involvement in their outdoor garden. Local artists had also been supported with their murals across the borough and Ferham School's homelessness project had seen scooters, helmets and high-vis vests being provided to enable some of the young people to become Loneliness Ambassadors. The scooters enabled them to get around the school site much quicker and provide support to any child that appeared frightened or lonely.

Ward Members were also involved with skips and community clean-up days and this would remain ongoing.

Councillor Jarvis further commented on the newsletter that was circulated around the Ward and the walkabout days within the Masbrough triangle. Issues had been raised about rodents, litter and fly tipping and where possible this had been progressed through Licensing and appropriate advice provided around concerns for benefit irregularities.

Landlord behaviour had also improved considerably following legal action by the Authority and this would be revisited to ensure progress was maintained. A recent door knocking day did uncover some continuing problems which have been forwarded to appropriate officers.

Ward Members continued to promote traffic awareness around local schools and a session was held at Meadow View School with PCSOs and speed cameras. The young people thoroughly enjoyed being able to be involved.

Every effort was being made to improve the lack of good visibility resulting from selfish parking around school sites and an area of derelict land near to Meadow View had resulted in many improvements to anti-social parking.

Surgeries were continuing and additional sessions arranged to support residents who may not have attended. There was a further street skip arranged for the 14th September, 2019 and volunteers were welcome. Litter picking equipment had been purchased and some also supplied to local residents who were also proactive in cleaning their area. Equipment had also been purchased for use at Blackburn Youth Centre.

There had also been regular meetings about anti-social behaviour and street nuisance, litter and graffiti where discussion ensued about the placing of Ward CCTV cameras in certain locations.

Many housing issues had also been resolved alongside the newly rolled waste programme.

Ward Members were encouraging people to walk round the Walker Mausoleum site, details of which were all in the newsletter. A huge amount of work has gone into this tidying up this area and following extensive research information sources were to be located on the site and hopefully link in with other historical information points across the borough. There were also plans to relocate some of the gravestones and suggestions with suggestions being received on where they should be placed.

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Councillor Jones endorsed the comments of his Ward colleagues, but expressed his distress at the timeframes of changeover from one process to another placing Rotherham West at a major disadvantage when Area Assemblies were disbanded as this fell within an election period. This meant communication with residents and local groups was very difficult so Ward Members had to consider alternative ways of engaging with communities.

Many of the projects brought forward were as a result of engagement from local schools and parents and this resulted in several largescale projects; some of them were still underway. This included the temporary car park to release school transport and on-road parking issues at a special school.

Work had also taken place with South Yorkshire Community Payback to install a grading system for traffic whilst leaving a field appearance, to assist in a project brambles on a piece of Education land to reopen a very over grown cycle path. This had saved the Council money and captured the imagination of local residents.

One of the Ward's Youth Centres had also received support with gym and environmental equipment to keep young people engaged.

As indicated above a number community skip days had taken place around the Ward and placed in areas of concern.

The Ward was celebrating its heritage with the use of new technology and a virtual reality app allowing the user to visit various sites. A date stone had also been relocated following the demolition of the Psalters Lane Building to a more prominent site in a nearby school that everybody could now visit.

It had been frustrating that during management of the support for projects Ward Members were having to rely more on external support to deliver the projects. However, the implementation of a new social media policy around neighbourhood working would allow for the promotion of events, which had been a failing in the past.

Ward Members had also been instrumental in setting up a co-ordinating group including task and finish groups and found this to be the best way forward for Rotherham West and the Ward would continue to take on this challenge.

Moving on to the Silverwood Ward Councillor Marles described his Ward and its coverage and diversity. This brought new challenges, but the Ward priorities had focused on community safety and community engagement activities for children alongside environmental improvements. Unfortunately, Councillor Russell was ill and had intended speaking on community engagement activity that she had been involved in.

Ward Members had helped fund a few improvements such as new curtains at Staple Green and a new bingo machine at the Apollo Centre and a Christmas party at Staple Green, all of which were well received.

Wherever possible Ward Members engaged with schools and had funded Billy and Belinda bollards at Sandhill Primary School. The young people themselves were able to design the bollards, which were realistic.

In addition, Ward Members had recently funded throw lines at Thrybergh Country Park as the old ones had big plastic rings that were not fit for purpose. It was also the intention to replace the small dog litter bins with bigger mixed waste bins.

Solar lights were also soon to be installed in and around Ravenfield on some cut through footpaths to aid safety and last month, in conjunction with the Swinton Ward, a subsidised young people's activity group was held for two days at Kilnhurst Recreation Ground. This was a big success and the young people had a fantastic time.

Silverwood Ward Members wished to place on record its thanks to the Neighbourhood Working Teams and especially, Julie Colley, from Rawmarsh Customer Service Centre.

Councillor Napper, having held his surgeries at the Apollo Centre, had witnessed the concerns that residents had around the bus stop with vans and cars parked across and plans were in hand for the painting of a yellow box so that parking could be enforced.

Another concern for residents had been for some pavements which were not accessible to wheelchairs and mobility scooters so Ward Members contributed to them being lowered.

At the Apollo Centre support was given to the purchase of bingo and raffle tickets to enable all the proceeds to be given to charity. The Centre was also encouraged to become a TARA and had voted in their Chairman.

At Sandhill Primary a competition was held and the young people were able to pick out their own designs and the winners presented with certificates at a presentation day and they were also invited into the Town Hall by the Mayor.

Complaints had also been received from residents at Elm Tree Farm about traffic speeds so go slow speed signs were painted on the road.

A defibrillator was eventually provided on the Resource Centre at Kilnhurst after some negotiation and training was also provided.

Further projects where the Ward had contributed included:-

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- Boxer fitness sessions for all ages.
- Sight and sound craft class at Staple Green.
- Bingo raffle tickets.
- Christmas dinners.
- Refurbishment at Staple Green.
- Skip day at March Flats.
- Community Grow Group at Ravenfield.
- Community picnic at the Ravenfield Arms.
- Friendship group along with a community group to contact all the isolated pensioners in the area.
- Funded defibrillators and training sessions at the Apollo Centre and Staple Green.
- Solar lights in Ravenfield opposite the Ravenfield Arms now complete.
- Funding for a defibrillator at Hooton Roberts on the wall at the Old Post Office on Doncaster Road with training.

In his right to reply Councillor Watson welcomed the excellent neighbourhood working that was taking place in Wards.

Resolved:- That the Ward updates be received and the contents noted.

Mover:- Councillor Watson

Seconder:- Councillor Read

242. NOTICE OF MOTION - ADOPTION OF INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE (IHRA) DEFINITION OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Proposed by Councillor Read and seconded by Councillor Watson:-

This Council:-

1. Abhors racism in all forms.
2. Notes the decision of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority to join with the government and other local authorities across the UK in signing up to the internationally recognised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism on 3rd June 2019.

The IHRA working definition states;

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish Community institutions and religious facilities.

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectively. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for "why things go wrong." It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- *Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.*
- *Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonizing or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective - such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.*
- *Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.*
- *Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust)*
- *Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.*
- *Accusing Jewish citizens as being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations*
- *Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g. by claiming that the existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavour.*
- *Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.*
- *Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g. claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis.*
- *Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis*
- *Holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of the state of Israel."*

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Restate its condemnation of all forms of racism in all its manifestations

2. Adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism as the working model for challenging and confronting incidents of this form of racism.

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

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

243. STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendation and minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee be adopted, but subject to an amendment to confirm a change to the date of the next meeting as being Wednesday, 18th September, 2019.

Mover:- Councillor McNeely

Secunder:- Councillor Clark

244. AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Secunder:- Councillor Walsh

245. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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

Mover:- Councillor Roche

Secunder:- Councillor Mallinder

246. PLANNING BOARD

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

Mover:- Councillor Sheppard

Secunder:- Councillor Williams

247. LICENSING

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

Mover:- Councillor Ellis

Seconder:- Councillor Beaumont

248. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

(1) Councillor Cowles confirmed he had been contacted by a resident who had his garage burgled. Discovered at 6:00 a.m. he spent the next four hours trying 101 to get a crime incident number for insurance purposes. His insurance company were not playing ball as they were unhappy with the reporting delay suggesting he was at fault. He, therefore, asked when would 101 be fit for purpose?

Councillor Sansome confirmed the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable would be holding their Public Accountability Board meetings on the 6th November, 2019 and 10th March, 2020 at Rotherham Town Hall.

He suggested that if the Leader of the Opposition wished to raise concerns with the Police and Crime Panel that Councillor Cowles join the membership thus holding the Police and Crime Commissioner to account.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles reiterated had if he been involved he would not have accepted the 14% increase and would not have rolled over and done what was required. He believed the Panel were not fit for purpose and that members of the public were sick and tired of the system and were reluctant to use it. He reiterated he was not an insurance expert so could not confirm whether or not an insurance company would pay out for the items stolen from the member of the public's garage so asked would the Police and Crime Commissioner pay for them.

Councillor Sansome pointed out that since he had been on the Police and Crime Panel he had raised a number of times the issue of 101 failing, but had not seen any Member of UKIP or the Brexit Party turn up to a Public Accountability Board meeting to ask the Commissioner or the Chief Constable face to face about the issues.

The only Member that had actually turned up was Councillor Short where the budget was passed which would see the number of officers increasing in South Yorkshire; not just for this year, but for the following two years as reported in the Sheffield Star.

Councillor Sansome took his responsibility seriously and would fight for Rotherham. However, if Councillor Cowles had particular problems perhaps he would prefer to contact the Police and Crime Commissioner, with whom he was in contact regularly, to share the background and to see if this issue could be resolved.

249. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES

(1) Councillor R. Elliott confirmed it was good to see the Leader's comments regarding the HS2 review, and asked if he were able to say if the Sheffield City Region and Dan Jarvis held the same views and would they be submitting evidence to the review? If so, would it be fair and representational including Rotherham and Doncaster Councils' views?

The Leader shared the frustration that there had not been consensus across the City Region amongst the Councils about the best route. Rotherham and Doncaster together have taken a particularly strong line about the M18 route saying that this was not the right route. Sheffield have a slightly different view again. Douglas Oakervee who was chairing the Government's review had approached Dan Jarvis about a week ago and said could he come and meet representatives of the City Region for exactly the reason suggested. Mayor Jarvis suggested that separate meetings with the different local authorities would be the better way of allowing the authorities to express their views either way.

This was why last night, alongside Mayor Ros Jones from Doncaster, the Leader met with Doug Oakervee and set out the Council's concerns about the routes and the advantages/disadvantages which came at great cost and impact on communities. Discussion ensued on where it was thought the high-speed network should run and how the cost savings were incorrect. This would be followed up in writing and every opportunity would be taken to cast as much doubt as possible on the Government's plan.

In a supplementary question Councillor Elliott asked whether local action groups' concerns would be represented in any current correspondence they may be between Sheffield City Region and the review bearing in mind that there was only Rotherham and Doncaster Councils who had listened to their residents' concerns, considered the facts and used motions asking for the Leeds leg of HS2 to be scrapped. Sheffield and Barnsley Councils were still sitting on the fence whilst at the same time all South Yorkshire M.P.s with the exception of Sir Kevin Barron, including Sarah Champion, continued to promote. He, therefore, asked if the Leader would authorise the sending of a copy of the motion passed by this Council in December, 2018 for inclusion into the review.

The Leader confirmed he would send a copy of the motion. He would argue that the Secretary of State at the time was ignored when the Government made the decision to change the route. It would be more meaningful to the Government to adjust the impact on communities, as a primary concern, and the case would be made. The motion would, therefore, be shared and any correspondence would also be shared. The issue of action groups was also raised yesterday due to the short timeframe for the review, but the Chair of the Review did indicate that if groups wanted to send correspondence for Councils to passport through this would ensure views were available as part of the Review.

(2) Councillor Carter asked would the Council accept applications from Council tenants who owned dogs for flats that were not on the ground floor?

Councillor Beck confirmed the Council would only allow tenants to keep a dog in an upper floor flat if the property had its own entrance (i.e. it did not share the entrance with another household).

The only exception when permission would be granted was for applications to keep a registered guide dog, a registered hearing dog or an assistance dog.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked could the Cabinet Member explain the rationale for the restrictions when there was a housing shortage.

Councillor Beck explained that the problem was where a tenant had an upper floor flat with a shared entrance that they entered the property. They must not have had a dog initially as they would not otherwise have been able to bid on an upper floor flat. Where a tenant then wanted a dog discussion would take place about them potentially moving to say a ground-floor flat with its own dedicated entrance.

It was generally not a problem, but the policy was that if you had a shared entrance with another household they may have allergies or children in the house so a dog using the same entrance may cause a problem.

(3) Councillor Cowles, having received a number of complaints concerning the recent late night disturbances along Broom Lane involving the use of fireworks, cars racing along the length of the road, noise, abuse, cars parked on verges and double parked, asked what would the Council do to discourage this behaviour and to ensure it did not happen again?

Councillor Hoddinott was aware that parking issues and noise disturbance during a wedding event between 28th July and 3rd August this year were raised in the press, but pointed out that as far as she was aware, the Council had not received any complaints from residents during this time related to this event.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles referred to an incident in Bradford and a recent serious injury to a young man who had a firework thrown at him and asked if the Council would make contact with Bradford to understand what they were doing and if possible adopt similar restrictions to fireworks in Rotherham.

Councillor Hoddinott explained there needed to be some information to determine if the fireworks were in gardens or on the street. She was happy to look at how Bradford could help and learn lessons, but asked Councillor Cowles to provide the details of the individuals that have complained and officers would ensure contact was made with all complainants and their concerns investigated.

(4) Councillor Carter referred to the last meeting where the Cabinet Member agreed to raise the issue of reinstating a regular direct bus from Brinsworth to Meadowhall Interchange with bus companies and asked what progress had been made in securing the reinstatement of this regular bus service, something which Brinsworth residents clearly wanted.

Councillor Lelliott explained the operation of any Brinsworth - Meadowhall Interchange route was a commercial decision made by the bus operator. The Council had raised this as an issue, both in email communication with SYPTE and as a formal request through the Rotherham Bus Partnership Operations Group. First and SYPTE were currently looking into the services in the area, but without any financial subsidy the Council could only negotiate and lobby for the reinstatement of the route and urged Ward Members to do the same.

SYPTE have reported that in the short-term there were currently no plans for bus operators to re-introduce this service. Any further updates would be shared with interested parties.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked if he could have a copy of any correspondence advocated to SYPTE.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed this could be provided.

(5) Councillor Cowles referred to the Advertiser of the 23rd August, 2019 regarding Maltby Cemetery and the wall and fence at £25,000 and believed Dignity were having a laugh. This was a red brick wall with metal railings on top. The bulk of the bricks could be reclaimed and cleaned up and asked was there any wonder that, as a result of the contract, Dignity could charge this sum, while residents were being fleeced?

Councillor Hoddinott explained Dignity would be meeting the full cost of the repairs and there would be no extra cost to the Council or residents and actually the Council did not pay Dignity for this contract they paid the Council.

Dignity were re-erecting the wall and it was heartbreaking for the families that have been involved and whilst it was taking time to source the bricks to recreate the cemetery from the original stone work was going on. The Council's thoughts were with those families who had seen their gravestones knocked down following the crash through the wall by a driver.

Councillor Cowles acknowledged the concerns over the gravestones, but the wall was a small red brick wall with a metal fence on top which seemed unlikely to cost anywhere near £25,000. He was more than happy to look at how this could be done at a lower cost.

Councillor Hoddinott had no reply to his comment.

(6) Councillor Carter referred to the wildflowers in the central reservations of roads in the borough which have brightened up the area and asked could the Cabinet Member please clarify whether the flowers used were all indigenous to the United Kingdom, and if not what evidence was there to show that these provided suitable habits for wildlife species that have been in significant decline over recent years?

Councillor Allen confirmed the wildflower scheme had been a great success for a number of years now and attracted a significant amount of positive attention. The Council worked with a social enterprise operated by Green Estates Limited and Sheffield University who researched the types of seeds to use and selected flowering species that provided nectar and seed which were a food source for many insects, and birds.

The seed was a combination of native varieties which made up the highest percentage of the mix and non-native which were all from the northern hemisphere.

(7) Councillor Napper what was RMBC's views on the recent debates in Parliament on Christianophobia?

The Leader confirmed he had not seen the recent debates in Parliament on Christianophobia. However, the Council's position on such matters was very clear in that it did not discriminate on the basis of faith. This prejudice had no place in our society and it would not be tolerated.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper referred to the Christian beliefs, the views of the Vicar in Wickersley, and how some people were being pilloried for their views and being killed and persecuted in different countries and asked how the Government was going to legislate to fight this prejudice.

The Leader explained there was a world a world of difference between defending people's right to have beliefs and so practice those debates. The views expressed by others like the Vicar of Wickersley were occasionally completely unacceptable and drifted into the kind of anti-Semitic language which had been criticised earlier.

It remained uncertain whether the Vicar realised that his views were in this context, but this Council would not promote tolerance within borough. The Vicar had the right to practice religion and to work with his congregation as he saw fit and this may continue to be the case.

(8) Councillor Cowles pointed out he had received complaints from Council residents who had reported the need for repairs. They were being told that the repair did not warrant action and that there was insufficient budget to pay for it. He asked did the Cabinet Member consider this to be an acceptable response from what was suggested to be a responsible landlord?

Councillor Beck reiterated that in general terms, Rotherham Council were responsible for all repairs to its housing stock that qualified under The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994. These eligible repairs included repairs to items both inside and outside of the property.

He confirmed that there were no budget pressures preventing eligible repairs being completed.

On occasions some repairs may not be undertaken immediately and were batched together with repairs of a similar nature and completed at a later date on a planned programme. Tenants should be made aware of this shortly after reporting the repair.

As part of the tenancy agreement tenants were responsible for some minor repairs such as changing a light bulb, replacing plugs, door handles, latches, lost keys etc.

The Cabinet Member asked that Councillor Cowles forward any specific cases and he would be willing to speak with officers regarding these.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles referred specifically to one resident who shared outbuildings with a Council tenant. She paid a considerable sum for the repair of the roof to prevent further ingress of water, but the building still floods as water was coming in from the other side from the Council property. The Council were so far refusing to pay to repair that side of the roof as it was too expensive and the service did not have the budget. He asked if the Cabinet Member if he would look into this if he passed through the details.

Councillor Beck confirmed that if Councillor Cowles could provide more details outside of the meeting he would investigate further.

(9) Councillor Carter asked with the summer coming to an end would the trial of extended opening hours at the crematoria run by Dignity be extended to ensure that residents could make use of extended burial times until sunset during the winter months?

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed the agreement with Dignity was that the trial on extended hours would take place between 1st April and 30th September. This was agreed by all parties to be a reasonable period for the trial, allowing the time during the winter months to evaluate the position and make any necessary changes to services and contractual arrangements from April, 2020. There were no plans to extend this into the winter months.

(10) Councillor Napper asked how many staff did RMBC employ in the tourist office to promote Rotherham?

Councillor Allen confirmed the Visitor Centre had staff working six days a week from Monday to Saturday which was equivalent to 1.2 Full Time Employees (FTE).

The Council's Visitor Centre was based in Rotherham Town Centre on High Street, where it shared a shop space with the Emporium.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper referred to promotion of the borough and where he had only seen a couple of places in the Rotherham Advertiser and the free delivered magazine.

He would like to have seen a few billboards advertising something extra and not just in Rotherham town centre, but also in the outer areas as Rotherham had some lovely places to visit.

Councillor Allen pointed out it was Rotherham Show at the weekend and she expected to see as many people there as possible.

Councillor Napper was absolutely right Rotherham did have some beautiful places and activities and after every Rotherham Show there would be a debrief to see if there was any learning and these comments about billboards would be fed into that discussion.

(11) Councillor Cowles referred to the Advertiser of the 2nd August, 2019 and the public admission of silence on the CSE issue where Councillor Atkin said if he had not kept a secret, he and the Council would be a different place, but that's a long story. He asked given this matter was of considerable public interest and the public had been patient long enough, when could the unabridged version be shared?

The Leader explained the unabridged version had already been told. He was sure that everyone who was involved with the Council in 2005 wished in retrospect that they had done more to prevent the calamitous failings in the Council's Children's Services. He was sure this applied as much to Councillor Turner as it did to Councillor Atkin, who he knew felt personally very strongly about the importance of keeping Rotherham's children safe, and who had been a strong advocate for making the investments and improvements that have made over the last few years to achieve that.

(12) Councillor Carter last year asked about air pollution problems in Brinsworth which led to an offensive smell which residents felt was from nearby factories. This issue was still causing problems for Brinsworth residents. He, therefore, asked if the Council would commit to finding the source of this air pollution and taking measures to ensure that this blight on residents did not continue to occur?

Councillor Hoddinott explained following a report last year action was taken by colleagues in Sheffield Council relating to a company in Sheffield.

There were a number of current complaints from residents in Brinsworth relating to odours in particular tar/bitumen smells which were being investigated.

Although the odour was intermittent during the day, Officers have on one occasion witnessed the odours, but have so far been unable to identify the source. There were a number of industrial sites in the area and the Council, together with colleagues in Sheffield would work to identify the origins of the smells. If evidence was found that could be linked to a site then action would be taken to ensure that the problem was mitigated. Councillor Buckley had been actively involved with the service to resolve some of the issues.

(13) Councillor Napper referred to Woodlathes Balancing Pond and asked what was RMBC's obligation to the maintenance of the pond?

Councillor Allen explained the Council was not responsible for the maintenance of Woodlathes Balancing Pond. Persimmon (the housing developer for the site) was obligated to carry out the maintenance necessary for the management of the estates surface water drainage system.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper explained that when he made enquiries he was advised that when Beezer Homes signed over to Persimmons they signed an agreement, along with Rotherham Council, that either one would look after the balancing pond. Having arranged a site visit, which Persimmon did not attend, the reeds had been removed, but the pond needed dredging. He asked if the Cabinet Member could look at the historic agreement.

Councillor Allen pointed out the maintenance agreement dated 14th December, 2014 confirmed the developer was responsible for the maintenance of the balancing pond. Following discussion with Persimmons the Council was satisfied that Persimmons' contractors were carrying out their maintenance responsibilities.

Should the maintenance not be carried out then Yorkshire Water would take any necessary action to ensure that surface water drainage system was operational.

The Council would only take back responsibility for the pond's maintenance in the event that Persimmons became insolvent and Yorkshire Water made this request to the Council.

(14) Councillor Cowles asked the Leader, when he was quick to point out and demand that others took action against their Members for inappropriate historical mistakes, when would he expect to take action against Member/s who failed in their safeguarding responsibilities of vulnerable children given the recent public admission that they knew of the CSE abuse?

The Leader explained the Labour Party did indeed take action before the last elections. A process independent of the borough was undertaken and the Members who were here today not only came through that process, but also won the support of the electors. The exact same information that Labour Councillors had then was given to a Member of the former UKIP Party here today which was an indication of what you thought.

Councillor Cowles talked about "historical mistakes". Unfortunately, when a Member of his group was highlighted in a national newspaper associating online with highly racist and islamophobic Facebook Group, that was not a "historical mistake". Nor was when his party chose to remove all its social media activity in response, presumably because it was not known what it said – that was not a "historical mistake".

In a supplementary comment Councillor Cowles confirmed he endorsed and supported the early action taken so there was no issue. The issue was that over the longer term, following some comments from Labour supporters, there was a demand that action be taken.

(15) Councillor Carter asked how much money had been secured from the Department for Transport's Road to Zero strategy fund for providing on-street electric vehicle charging points?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the Council did not submit a funding application to the DfT for residential on street charge points, as part of the Road to Zero Strategy. On-street charge points were relatively new technology and advice from other Local Authorities in the region was that more information was required before they were rolled out.

In fact, the Government attracted widespread criticism for the scheme which did not generally provide Councils with the level of funding that they needed, or for the infrastructure that most places have prioritised.

The Council had, however, secured a total of £705,000 by the DfT and DEFRA as a grant towards the 'Implementation of Early Measures' linked to the Clean Air Zone mandate, which had funded off-street charging points.

The Council was committed to growing the market in plug-in vehicles because of the contribution that they, and other low and ultra-low emission technologies, could make across the economic and environmental priorities; including climate change and air quality. Therefore, to date, the Council had utilised the funding to service public car parks rather than on-street charging, and had provided EV charging at the following car parks:

- Wellgate Multi-Storey.
- Wath Library.
- Rawmarsh Service Centre.
- Drummond Street Car Park.
- Swinton Bridge Street Car Park.
- Scala Car Park.
- Aston Service Centre.
- Rother Valley Country Park.
- Thrybergh Country Park.

(16) Councillor Napper asked would the Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety look again at returning the top 50 metres of Sandhill Road back to a two way system?

Councillor Hoddinott was aware this question had been asked about a year ago and Councillor Napper had been out to do site visits with officers. If it was believed something had changed at the site then the Cabinet Member asked that she be advised, but the technical advice still from the officers was that it would not be safe to change that system.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper confirmed he had met with two officers and it was reported that it did not confirm to Government standard, but the exit was far worse with people not being able to see when they came out on North Road. Just by opening up the last 50 metres this would alleviate some of the problems.

Councillor Hoddinott explained that by opening up that section it went against the advice. If it was proved otherwise she would be happy to take a look.

In terms of modern standards the road was a little different to when it was originally put in about forty years ago. This appeared to be more about parking and being able to see which might be a slightly different issue. However, officers were able to guide around safety, but there was probably more than could be done and this would be looked into.

(17) Councillor M. Elliott asked, since the opening in April of Waleswood Caravan and Camping Park, had the number of bookings met expectations?

Councillor Allen confirmed that since the site had now been open for five months, it was receiving excellent reviews. Councillor Elliott himself had visited and was duly impressed by the facilities that he found on site.

In the period so far from April to August the site had taken more than 4,000 bookings and it was commendable. However, there were a number of challenges for the site in that Gullivers were not opening until next spring combined with the blue/green algae at Rother Valley. It was, therefore, expected that more bookings would be received in a similar period next year.

The fact that perhaps there had not been as many bookings as expected meant there were plenty of opportunities for caravan owners like Councillor Elliott to book in for an Autumn break.

In a supplementary question Councillor Elliott confirmed he was, indeed, a longstanding member of the caravan and motor home club and he really wanted the site to be a success. He asked, given that several caravan owners had expressed concern saying the nightly pitch fees were too expensive, would the Cabinet Member give consideration to re-examining the charges currently levied.

Councillor Allen confirmed she would engage in a dialogue and very happy to have a benchmarking exercise around where the prices were. It was her understanding the site prices were very competitive.

250. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for consideration.