

**COUNCIL MEETING
22nd July, 2020**

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

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

350. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor was proud to announce the achievement of two awards by the Council; the first where Rotherham had won a Gold Performance Award for Address Data at the recent 2019 Geoplace Exemplar Awards. Local authorities must maintain a database of all residential, commercial, telecoms and utilities addresses within their area. The data had wide usage including the emergency services, so it was vital it was accurate and up-to-date.

In recent years, the Planning Policy team had improved this database tremendously, achieving bronze standard in 2014 and silver standard by 2015. Further data matching work on over 600,000 records and the introduction of daily exports to the national database had resulted in Rotherham reaching Gold Standard in 2018 and maintaining this high performance in 2019.

This was another example of the hard work that went into the technical functions of the Planning Service. These “unsung” functions did not often get the limelight, but were fundamental to the Council continuing to deliver an excellent service for Rotherham residents and businesses.

Secondly, the Council had won an award for Data Quality and Improvements for Streets, in recognition of the way the street information database was managed.

This related to the information captured on the Street Gazetteer. Data set requirements changed on a regular basis requiring constant management and inclusion of new data. Data in the Gazetteer included street geometry, additional street data, sensitivities, and engineering difficulties amongst others.

The data was uploaded to Geo-place each month for verification where it had to pass various criteria as part of the Authorities Data Co-operation Agreement and current data entry conventions. Utilities and others download the data direct from Geo-place and this allowed them to plan

COUNCIL MEETING - 22/07/20

and schedule their works on the highway, providing the data for the Electronic Transfer of Notices. The Street Gazetteer also provided data to the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) that in turn provided data that was widely used by HMRC, National office for statistics, emergency responders and others.

The Mayor asked everyone present to join her in a round of applause.

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

351. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beaumont, Cusworth, Marriott, Pitchley, Short and Yasseen.

352. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications received.

353. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Councillor Jepson made reference to Minute No. 330 (Petitions) and how a response to the petition had not yet been received. This would be investigated further.

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 3 June 2020 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

354. PETITIONS

The Mayor advised Members that no petitions had been received since the previous Council meeting held on 3 June 2020.

355. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Carter declared a personal interest in Minute No. 367 (Motion in respect of the opening of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic) on the grounds of being a member of the British Medical Council.

356. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Mr Paddy Cawkwell asked "When the licence of a taxi driver is revoked AND there is a concern that the person whose licence is revoked may have information about criminal activities (or there is a suspicion the

person was involved in criminal activities), is this information shared with South Yorkshire Police?”

In response the Chair or the Licensing Board and Licensing Committee advised that the Council’s Licensing Service notified South Yorkshire Police every time that a licence was revoked.

As a supplementary question Mr Cawkwell asked that as every victim of a crime involving a licence holder had the potential to create a cost for the Council, how were conflicts of interest prevented when the Council was working with victims of crime when the result of the investigations could result in a cost for the Council. The Chair in response advised that all complaints made by victims of crime were always investigated with no regard to any potential costs and that the appropriate actions were always taken.

2. The second question that had been submitted for the meeting had been withdrawn overnight, as the Leader of the Council had provided a written response to the question at the request of the member of the public.

3. **Mr Marcus Wheatcroft** was unable to attend the meeting and would receive a written response.

357. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Mayor advised Members that there were no items of business on the agenda that would require the exclusion of the press or public from the meeting.

358. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader presented his update statement and in doing so drew attention to how Rotherham had seen, up to the end of last week, 320 deaths due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the thoughts and prayers went out to all those who had been affected by the virus.

The infection rate was higher than the U.K. average here in Rotherham, but lower than areas like Leicester and Blackburn.

Since the last Council Meeting, Rotherham had seen a phased approach to lockdown restrictions being lifted. People could now meet with family and friends (two households), visit the pub or a restaurant, have a haircut and start to see a return to some familiar and important aspects of daily life. However, people must remain cautious, be careful and remember that Coronavirus was still a very real threat. The virus had not gone away.

On the 22nd May, 2020, the Government announced that as part of its national strategy to reduce infection from Coronavirus, it would expect every area in England to create a Local Outbreak Control Plan. The

COUNCIL MEETING - 22/07/20

Council had its plan in place and had established a Local Outbreak Board which aimed to provide public-facing engagement and communication for outbreak response. The meetings were chaired by myself, the Leader, the Board meetings which were also attended by some Members (Councillors Cowles, Roche and Watson) joining today's meeting and by officers that have accountability for addressing key elements of the Coronavirus response across the Borough. The objectives of the Board were:-

- Support the effective communication of the test, trace and contain plan for the Rotherham Borough.
- Provide regular updates to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Record proceedings of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board and agree and review actions for Board Members.
- Provide oversight of the local response around prevention and management of Covid-19 outbreaks, as set out in the Local Outbreak Control Plan.
- Lead on communication with residents, businesses and stakeholders across the Rotherham Borough generally in relation to outbreak prevention and management.
- Engage with communities and groups where outbreaks may be more likely or where they have occurred.
- Receive assurance on progress against the delivery of the Local Outbreak Control Plan.

The Prime Minister's announcement over the weekend outlined new powers for Councils providing greater enforcement powers to facilitate local lockdowns to support the management of any outbreak. This meant that the Council was now able to enforce lockdowns of small areas (communities), close premises and cancel events which may be necessary to reduce the virus spreading and keep Rotherham open.

Rotherham's infection rate was high compared to other areas so people needed to continue to follow the guidance. Wash hands regularly, stay 2 m apart wherever possible and get tested if displaying symptoms or if a person just wished to take a test.

This week it would become mandatory to wear a face covering in all shops and certain exemptions existed for people who may have breathing difficulties or young children.

Only by continuing to work together, following the guidelines and being cautious were people all helping to reduce the spread of this deadly virus.

In the period where Members could ask questions of the Leader's statement, Councillor Carter reported how he had found the recent seminar as a useful update, but asked if the minutes of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board distributed to the Health and Wellbeing Board would be more helpful if they were sent to all Elected Members as a matter of procedure so Members could remain up-to-date with local measures that may need to be taken in a timely manner rather than a delay through appropriate channels.

The Leader took on board Councillor Carter's comments, but pointed out it was not up to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board to manage individual situations or to be responsible for the Public Health response and this would remain in the hands of professionals.

The minutes would fulfil the function as described and come through the Health and Wellbeing Board to this meeting. Communication would continue with Members on a regular basis.

There had not been a local outbreak situation which was why the Borough were doing so much extra testing. However, should there be a particular situation or outbreak then Ward Members would be informed and engaged in the response.

359. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING

Resolved:-

That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 June 2020 be received.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

360. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - BRAMLEY AND RAVENFIELD

Further to Minute No. 267 of Council held on 30th October, 2019, consideration was given to the report which provided a summary of the consultation responses received in respect of the Community Governance Review being undertaken by the Council following the receipt of a petition from Ravenfield Parish Council.

A total of 520 consultation responses have been received by various means of website submissions, e-mails, letters and handwritten consultation forms submitted at the drop in sessions, and to the Clerks of the affected Parish Councils.

The options set out in the consultation were:-

COUNCIL MEETING - 22/07/20

1. No change to the existing arrangements
2. Reducing the existing Parish of Bramley and extending the Parish of Ravenfield to include the land allocated for residential use adjacent to Moor Lane South, proposed by the petition from Ravenfield Parish Council.

In summary, generally residents of Bramley were in favour of Option 1. They felt that the residents of the proposed new development would use the facilities and services within Bramley, and, therefore, Bramley Parish Council should receive the Community Infrastructure Levy money and precept from the proposed new development. Furthermore, many residents of Bramley felt that there would be increased traffic from the proposed development through their village.

In general, residents of Ravenfield were in favour of Option 2. Residents of the proposed new development on Moor Lane South would be more likely to use the facilities and services in Ravenfield due to the proximity of the proposed development to the centre of Ravenfield, and, therefore, felt that Ravenfield Parish Council should benefit from the Community Infrastructure Levy and precept from the proposed new houses.

Taking into account the outcome of the consultation, along with the comments submitted in the consultation responses, the arguments put forward by both Parish Councils, the fact that it had not been possible to consult with residents of the relevant area as no houses within the proposed development were yet built, the recommended proposal was Option 1, no change to the existing arrangements.

Further consultation would take place upon the proposal following this meeting. The proposed outcome of the Community Governance Review would be put on the Council's website between 24th July, 2020 and 30th August, 2020, and residents' views would thereby be sought as to the proposal. This would be reported back to full Council in due course.

Members supported the proposed recommendation with no change to boundaries on the basis of the consultations from the Parish Councils indicated above. When Parish Councils could not come to a mutual agreement then the status quo must be maintained.

Resolved:- (1) That the proposed outcome of the Community Governance Review that there be no change to the current arrangements in respect of the Parish boundary between Ravenfield and Bramley be noted.

(2) That a further period of consultation (as set out at Paragraph 4.2 of the report submitted) be undertaken in respect of the proposed outcome of the Community Governance Review.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Seconder:- Councillor Allen

361. AMENDMENT TO CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2020-21 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how in March, 2020 the Government postponed the local elections that were scheduled to be held on 7th May, 2020, because of the restrictions introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the local elections proposed to be held on Thursday, 6th May, 2021, this would necessitate some changes to the previously agreed calendar of meetings and this report, therefore, sought approval to adopt the revised Calendar of Meetings as set out as part of the report.

Resolved:- (1) That the Calendar of Meetings for the 2020-21 Municipal Year be amended to remove all meetings other than Planning Board and Licensing Board Sub-Committees from 30th March, 2021 until the date of the Annual Meeting (Business Meeting).

(2) That the Annual Meeting (Civic and Ceremonial) 2021 be held on Friday, 21st May, 2021.

(2) That the Annual Meeting (Business Meeting) 2021 be held on Wednesday, 26th May, 2021.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

362. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT - 2019-20 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Consideration was given to the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20 Municipal Year.

Reference was made to the timely reflection on the achievements and difference Scrutiny had made, as the Local Government Act 2000 that created Scrutiny was given Royal Assent twenty years ago next week.

The report, circulated with the agenda papers, highlighted a number of examples where Scrutiny had led to meaningful outcomes, such as:-

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Board recommendations to the Safer Rotherham Partnership on protocols for information sharing.
- Improving Lives Select Commission support for having the Pause Project, which had enabled many women to achieve positive outcomes.
- A recommendation from Improving Places Select Commission for parking fines to be included in the Time for Action contract.
- Feedback from Health Select Commission led to Autism being considered as a discreet issue from Learning Disability in the Rotherham Place Plan.

There was also the less tangible, but equally important, close scrutiny of services over time until Members were assured that progress and improvements have been made that were highlighted in the report.

Looking forward Scrutiny had a challenging work programme. This would focus on the recovery and re-set from the pandemic where Scrutiny would play a key role in shaping future developments.

Specific thanks were offered to all Scrutiny Members for their commitment to undertake meaningful scrutiny and for their hard work once again.

Thanks also went to the co-optees for their insightful contributions to the work of the Select Commissions and the service users who had shared their experiences. This involvement from the public was something to be built on this year.

In addition, thanks were extended to the Executive, officers and partners for engaging in and supporting Scrutiny, which remained a key function in local democracy.

Tribute was also paid to the invaluable service of two officers; one who was retiring shortly and the other who was leaving to take up a more senior role in another authority. Janet Spurling and James McLaughlin were thanked for their support to the Scrutiny process and to all Elected Members.

Resolved:- That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-20 be approved.

(2) That this Council's best wishes be afforded to both Janet Spurling on her retirement and James McLaughlin on his new employment.

Mover:- Councillor Steele

Seconder:- Councillor Cowles

363. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW - CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER TAKEOVER CHALLENGE - HATE CRIME

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how each year one of the personal highlights was working with Youth Cabinet on the Takeover Challenge. The young people were very committed and as always had done a good, professional job this year on their chosen theme of hate crime.

This report outlined their findings and recommendations following the spotlight review, with a formal response expected in the autumn.

Recognition was given to the good work already taking place to address hate crime with the young people making recommendations around:-

- Partners continuing to engage with young people.
- Work in and between schools.
- Involving young people in a peer educator initiative.
- Further work on awareness raising.

Tributes were also made to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, Janet Spurling and Sarah Bellamy for their support to this initiative each year.

Councillor Hoddinott also placed on record her thanks to the Youth Cabinet for looking at this important issue, which had not gone away in the Covid-19 pandemic and people were still suffering.

A number of recommendations had been made for the Safer Rotherham Partnership to look at and engagement was welcomed with the Youth Cabinet in moving this forward.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and recommendations in respect of the review of Hate Crime be noted.

(2) That the response of Cabinet be reported back to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Rotherham Youth Cabinet.

Mover:- Councillor Steele

Seconder:- Councillor Cowles

364. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND PANELS

Consideration was given to the report and the amendments set out as an appendix and circulated with the Mayor's Letter.

Resolved:- That the amendments to the memberships be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

365. NOTICE OF MOTION - SMART MOTORWAYS

This Council notes:-

- That sections of the M1 that run close and through our Borough have been converted to 'Smart Motorways' that remove a permanent hard shoulder on the motorway.
- In 2013, this Council told the Government "that the risk of collisions involving stationary vehicles during non-peak times is an unacceptable risk and one which will have serious and potentially fatal consequences".
- On this 16-mile stretch of the M1 there have been five fatalities in 10 months.
- The AA, the RAC, the Police Federation, our local MP Sarah Champion, have also expressed serious concerns over the safety of this scheme.

This Council believes:-

- That all-lane running is fundamentally flawed, with large distances between emergency refuges and an inability to identify vehicles stranded in the traffic quickly enough. That any benefits from increased capacity is outweighed by these serious safety concerns.

This Council resolves:-

- To reiterate the Council's opposition to all-lane running using the hard shoulder as a permanent live traffic lane.
- To offer our support to the campaigns of families affected to get all lane running reverted.

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

Mover:- Councillor Hoddinott

Seconder: Councillor Taylor

366. NOTICE OF MOTION - FLOOD DEFENCES

This Council notes:-

- The flooding of November 2019 had a big effect on local residents and businesses across Rotherham including Dinnington, Kilnhurst, Whiston, Parkgate, Wath and the Town Centre.
- 135 homes flooded with 49 households still out of their homes at the start of the year.
- Over 300 businesses were affected.
- Kilnhurst School flooded and was closed until Easter.
- Rotherham train station, the tram-train and buses were all affected for many days.
- Community and recreational facilities were also affected..

This Council believes:-

- That more can be done to assist our residents and businesses by ensuring that the works needed to prevent future flooding are funded to allow their preparation and construction in the coming years.

This Council resolves:-

- To let the Government know that this Council believes that the £51 million of funding should be committed now, so flood defence works can start.

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

Mover:- Councillor Sheppard

Seconder:- Councillor Sansome

(As an update it was noted that Kilnhurst School would be closed until October (not Easter) and that the committed funding total was £48 million (not £51 million))

367. NOTICE OF MOTION - OPENING OF SCHOOLS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This Council :-

places on record its support and thanks to all the essential workers in our community: the NHS, the voluntary and retail sectors, drivers and care workers during this difficult and challenging time of the Coronavirus pandemic. We wish to express our sincere condolences to the people of our Borough who have lost loved ones during this period.

The Government is placing pressure on schools to reopen. However, we note the position of the British Medical Association in its support for the National Education Union's five tests before extending the opening of schools.

This Council calls on the Government not to reopen schools until it can give full assurances that children are safe and staff will be protected and supplied with personal protective equipment.

We urge the Government to work collaboratively with trade unions in the education sector to create clear conditions based on the tests the unions have helpfully set out, so that every school can implement them to ensure a safe return.

This Council will support any school establishment that refuses to open until all relevant safety measures are in place.

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

Mover:- Councillor Steele

Seconder:- Councillor Cooksey.

(Councillor Carter declared a personal interest on the grounds of being a member of the British Medical Council)

368. NOTICE OF MOTION - ROTHERHAM FIRE STATION

This Council notes:-

- That the Labour controlled South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority continues to refuse to reinstate the second pump in Rotherham, despite the overwhelming will of Members of the Council and the public in Rotherham.

COUNCIL MEETING - 22/07/20

This Council believes:-

- That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board's recommendation to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority in March 2018 should be reiterated in order for the Labour controlled authority to reinstate the second pump at Rotherham Fire Station to ensure that there is equality and consistency of cover with Sheffield and Doncaster.

This Council resolves:-

- That a formal request be made to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority to reinstate the second pump in Rotherham.
- That the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority be recommended to recruit and train sufficient personnel, as a matter of urgency, to fill all vacant posts in Rotherham and across South Yorkshire.

Mover:- Councillor R. Elliott

Seconded:- Councillor M. Elliott.

An amendment was put and carried and became the substantive motion.

Motion now reads:-

This Council notes:-

- The 2020 review of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) will incorporate an independent operational risk assessment and that this process will enable an in-depth interrogation of operational fire and rescue provision in Rotherham.

This Council believes:-

- That the independent operational risk assessment is the best way to assess the way to maximise the safe provision of Fire cover across South Yorkshire, not politically partisan motions.

This Council resolves:-

- That a formal request be made to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority on the conclusion of the independent operational risk assessment, for a detailed analysis of the effect of reducing the night-time provision in Rotherham, and any findings that may identify a negative impact on community safety be addressed in a manner appropriate to the risk, including due consideration of reinstatement of the second pump at Rotherham central.

- That the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority be recommended to continue to recruit and train sufficient personnel, as a matter of urgency, to fill all vacant posts in Rotherham and across South Yorkshire in line with the available budget.

The substantive motion was put and carried.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconded:- Councillor Taylor

369. NOTICE OF MOTION - BLACK LIVES MATTER

There are moments in time when we are compelled to stand back and reflect. The killing of George Floyd under the knee of police officers in America is one of those times. We cannot, indeed we must not fail to share our horror and sadness that in 2020 people are still persecuted, murdered and disadvantaged purely because of the colour of their skin. We cannot ignore that this is happening in the UK.

- Between April 2018 and March 2019, there were 4 stop and searches for every 1,000 white people, compared with 38 for every 1,000 black people.
- Black women were more than twice as likely to be arrested as white women – there were 7 arrests for every 1,000 black women, and 3 arrests for every 1,000 white women.
- In the year to March 2019, black people were more than 4 times as likely as white people to be detained under the Mental Health Act – 306.8 detentions per 100,000 people, compared with 72.9 per 100,000 people.
- 4% of white people were unemployed in 2018, compared with 7% of people from all other ethnic groups combined, and 9% for black people.
- In 2018, the unemployment rate for the Asian and the combined Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups was higher for women (8% and 13%) than for men (5% and 6%).
- In every socio-economic group and age group, White British households were more likely to own their own homes than all ethnic minority households combined.

This Council notes the disadvantage faced by black minority ethnic people and the systemic racism that exists across all structures of society, including within national and local government and the police.

This Council commits to making Rotherham an anti-racist town and will:-

- Stand in solidarity with our black and minority ethnic communities, in Rotherham and around the world.
- Work with local communities, listen to them, so we can better understand the racism they experience and the challenges that they face, including in areas such as local policing and the increased risks from Covid-19.

COUNCIL MEETING - 22/07/20

- Strengthen our anti-racism approach and ensure all staff participate in activity/training that supports them to address prejudice and bias, including where necessary their own.
- Report annually on how cCouncil services are responding to the different needs of people with protected equalities characteristics, setting out an annual plan to meet the needs of people from different backgrounds, addressing inequalities, and ensuring that the Council is meeting its obligations.

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

Mover:- Councillor Albiston

Seconder:- Councillor Read

370. STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor McNeely

Seconder:- Councillor Clark

371. AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Seconder:- Councillor Walsh

372. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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

Mover:- Councillor Roche

Seconder:- Councillor Mallinder

373. PLANNING BOARD

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

Mover:- Councillor Sheppard

Seconder:- Councillor Williams

374. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Seconder:- Councillor Read

375. LICENSING BOARD AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

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

Mover:- Councillor Ellis

Seconder:- Councillor McNeely

376. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

There were no questions.

377. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

1. Councillor B. Cutts asked the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health "With 130 people registered on their books, I am very concerned for the people who attend the Addison Day Centre I have received a 260 page report, however to date, page 75 Addison Road, is not mentioned. Could I now have the present position?"

In response the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health advised that, prior to the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic, there were 88 individuals who attended the Addison Centre and that they had all been contacted by staff regarding the reassessment process, with many individuals already accessing the new services. The Cabinet Member advised that while the Addison Centre was not in use due to current restrictions, staff at the Centre had remained in contact with individuals and carers to provide them with as much support as was possible. The Cabinet Member provided information on the activity that was happening to restart the transformation activity as restrictions related to the pandemic were eased. The Cabinet Member noted that the Council maintained its commitment to support all individuals and provided assurance that no one would move from the Addison Centre until they had a robust support plan in place.

As a supplementary question Councillor B Cutts advised that he had been provided with different information when he had asked this question previously and sought clarification on how the Council had arrived at the current position.

In response the Cabinet Member advised that the review of Service provision had started in 2015, with a plan being formulated in 2016 that had been subject to full consultation and Scrutiny input, with Scrutiny Members supporting the proposals. It was noted that the related Judicial Review regarding the changes had found in favour of the Council.

2. Councillor Carter asked the Cabinet Member for Cleaner, Greener Communities "What impact do you believe the coronavirus outbreak has had on the Council's plans to become the Children's Capital of Culture?"

COUNCIL MEETING - 22/07/20

In response the Cabinet Member for Cleaner, Greener Communities advised that the Children's Capital of Culture was planned for 2025, and that by then it would be hoped that the impact of the pandemic would be minimal. The Cabinet Member advised that originally it had been planned that external funding would be sought for outline proposals, and that in the first year of planning these would be focused on early conversations and consultation with target groups with a view to developing a more formal 'launch' of the programme early 2021. The Cabinet Member advised that as these programmes needed funding to ensure that they had the resources required to meaningfully engage with children and young people across the Borough, early discussions had taken place with Arts Council England who were supportive of bid for funding. However, as a result of the pandemic, Arts Council England had halted all funding streams and diverted resources into emergency funding that the Council was not eligible to receive.

The Cabinet Member advised with the applications for funding from Arts Council England reopening imminently, and given the time taken to develop a bid, engage with groups and to build trust and confidence, that it was now envisaged that the public launch of the Children's Capital of Culture programme would take place next Summer.

As a supplementary question Councillor Carter noted that given Rotherham's history the Borough was a surprising choice for the Children's Capital of Culture and asked what activity was planned in order to consult with residents to ensure that they were connected and engaged with the programme.

In response the Cabinet Member advised that increased public engagement was a key element in the Council's Cultural Strategy and that significant engagement activity was planned with the community via the Cultural Partnership Board and invited Councillor Carter to a future meeting of Board.

3. Councillor B. Cutts asked the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy "With the height of the steel shuttering now almost determined and complete, can we now have an update on the next stage of the Forge Island programme?"

In response the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy advised that now planning permission has been secured and that the next stage in delivering the scheme was to complete legal agreements with the cinema and hotel. The Cabinet Member advised that despite the implications of the pandemic, both the cinema and hotel operators that had been negotiating with the Council's development partner to locate on Forge Island remained keen to progress with the scheme and to conclude a deal.

There was no supplementary question.

4. Councillor Carter asked the Leader “How does the Leader believe the coronavirus outbreak has affected the medium and long-term strategies for the development of the Town Centre?”

In response the Leader noted that it was still very early to be able to fully assess the impact of the pandemic on the traditional high street but advised that the pandemic would most likely hasten the decline of traditional retail, and as such the Council’s Town Centre Masterplan was more important than ever. The Leader noted that the Masterplan recognised the need to enhance the attractiveness of the Town Centre, for it to have less emphasis on the traditional retail model and promote a more diverse and mixed offer that would create the right environment for future investment. The Leader advised that the Council would continue its focus on delivering its long-term strategy for the Town Centre.

As a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked for further information on the specific activities that had been happening in relation to the delivery of the Masterplan.

In response the Leader provided information on activities that were underway including information on the Future High Streets Fund bid, support from the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority, engagement with local businesses and the delivery of new homes in the Town Centre.

5. Councillor M. Elliott asked the Leader “With reference to a recent Licensing Application regarding a fast food outlet on Fitzwilliam Road, an objection was lodged by Children and Young Peoples Services on the grounds of anti-social activity, Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation. Therefore, as you are obviously aware of these issues, just what are you, and partners e.g. the Police doing about this?”

In response the Leader noted that in respect of the individual application for the fast food outlet there had not been any concerns raised about the individual making the application but rather concern about how this type of provision would advantage the local community and residents.

The Leader stated that Council staff and partners from across the partnership took concerns regarding child exploitation very seriously and that weekly multi-agency meetings were held in order to share intelligence, that in turn enabled preventative and disruptive actions to be taken where necessary to safeguard young people in Rotherham. The Leader noted that when the Council received information relating to concerns of exploitation of children, Children’s Services worked closely with colleagues in South Yorkshire Police to ensure that individual children were safe and that all actions were taken to progress a criminal investigation. Furthermore, the weekly intelligence meetings allowed information to be shared relating to indicators of vulnerability.

COUNCIL MEETING - 22/07/20

The Leader advised that at the weekly intelligence meetings information was shared from across the Borough that resulted in action being taken to protect individual children and young people and enabled work in neighbourhoods to reduce opportunities for offending to occur. The Leader noted the community-based activities that had taken place in the area of Eastwood, where Fitzwilliam Road was located to reduce vulnerabilities including increased use of re-deployable CCTV in the area.

The Leader advised that the Council's specialist CSE service, Evolve, and the Youth Offending Service were working closely with the Police, local schools and Drug and Alcohol Services for young people in order to undertake community and group work to support reduction and prevention. It was noted that following the pausing of some of these projects due to restrictions related to the pandemic work would soon be restarting. It was noted that even during the pandemic that several partners, including Council staff, the Police and the voluntary sector had continued to have a presence within the area supporting the community.

The Leader advised that regarding individual children and young people who had been identified as being at risk of exploitation, whether that be sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation, a range of interventions were available to be deployed dependent upon the assessed level of risk, with all concerns discussed at the weekly meetings, with appropriate follow-up activity and monitoring conducted. The Leader assured the meeting that tackling Child Sexual Exploitation remained a priority for the Council and its partners via the Safer Rotherham Partnership and the Safeguarding Children's Partnership and noted that a number of campaigns had been developed to encourage victims and bystanders to report information or intelligence.

As a supplementary question Councillor M. Elliott noted that given the history in Rotherham of Child Sexual Exploitation, it was essential that the Council was seen to be taking action in preventing this activity and asked why that, despite action having been taken, the visibility and awareness of these activities was not very visible to the local community.

In response the Leader advised that extra resources had been put into place in the area that had made a difference including Public Space Protection Orders and Selective Licensing. The Leader acknowledged that their remained significant challenges in the area but assured the meeting that a robust multi-agency approach was in place to deal with Child Sexual Exploitation in the area.

6. Councillor Carter asked the Chair of the Planning Board "With rumoured changes to planning legislation how does the Council intend to deal with the permitted development rules regarding the conversion of retail and office units?"

In response the Chair of the Planning Board advised that while there had been rumours that the Government was to make it easier to convert more types of buildings into residential accommodation without requiring planning permission, there had been no consultation documents issued in relation to any further changes to planning legislation. The Chair advised that statements had been made by the Government about a big shake up to the planning system and that a Planning Policy Paper had been promised for release in July setting out its 'plan for comprehensive reforms of England's planning system to better support the economy and release more land for housing in areas that need it most'. The Chair reaffirmed the Council was committed to high quality development and did not want to see an increase in low quality developments of office block conversions.

As a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked what type of reforms to the planning system would the Council like to see to ensure a sufficient supply of housing in Rotherham.

In response the Chair advised that the Council's Local Plan provided a good and sufficient supply of deliverable housing sites that continued to attract good levels of interest from developers.

7. Councillor M. Elliott asked the Cabinet Member for Housing "A property on Russel Street, Eastwood, was recently found being used as a Cannabis Farm. Does the Selective Licensing Policy allow for the Landlords License to be revoked in such circumstances?"

In response the Cabinet Member for Housing advised that where a landlord has a serious conviction, for example for cannabis cultivation, then the provisions within Legislation and the Council's Selective Licensing Scheme did allow Licenses to be revoked. The Cabinet Member noted that while there had been 238 revocations of Selective Licenses since May 2015, the vast majority of these had been for breaches of Selective Licensing conditions relating to the effective management of the property, such as failures to take up references from tenants or the failure to carry out gas and electrical safety checks.

There was no supplementary question.

8. Councillor Carter asked the Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety "Given the impact coronavirus is having on the hospitality sector, will the Council commit to removing the anti-business Cumulative Impact Zone Licensing Policy, or is this administration prepared to see the few successful hospitality areas in the Borough such as Wickersley go the same way as the Town Centre?"

In response the Cabinet Member for Waste, Road and Community Safety advised the Council did not consider the Cumulative Impact Policy to be anti-business and noted that there was nothing in the Policy that would prevent well managed, responsible businesses from thriving in Wickersley. The Cabinet Member advised that the Cumulative Impact

Policy did not ban new licensed premises from opening in the area but was intended to ensure that the night time economy in Wickersley could operate successfully, whilst at the same time ensuring that local residents were not adversely affected by those activities. The Cabinet Member stated that the Council recognised the challenging environment that many businesses, including those in the hospitality sector were currently facing and noted that the Council did not believe that the removal of the Cumulative Impact Policy would be an appropriate or necessary response to the current situation.

As a supplementary question Councillor Carter noted that with the hospitality sector struggling due to the pandemic, and with many residents employed in the sector, that the Council should be working to support hospitality businesses, and as such would the Council be promoting the Government's "Eat out to help out" scheme.

In response the Cabinet Member advised that the Council was working with the hospitality sector to help it recover from the impact of the pandemic and for residents to be able to enjoy the hospitality sector safely.

9. Councillor Carter asked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance "At the last Council meeting it was revealed that over 40% of the Council's workforce was working from home since the pandemic. How does the Council plan to facilitate home working long term?"

In response the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance advised that the latest Council workforce data showed that 46% of Council staff were currently working from home, but noted that many Council staff would have been working from home on some days of the week prior to the pandemic in accordance with the Council's flexible working arrangements. The Cabinet Member noted that since restrictions were imposed in March, that staff had quickly adapted to new ways of working and had continued to deliver Council services.

The Cabinet Member advised that like every good employer, the Council was aware that every colleague's personal circumstances were different and that whilst current working practices would suit some individuals, they would also present challenges for others. The Cabinet Member advised that in order to support staff the Council had provided a range of advice and support in relation to working from home.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Council would be reviewing its approach to home working assessments in order to support colleague's physical health. The Cabinet Member advised that a staff survey had just been launched so that colleagues across the Council could share their experiences of working from home in order to identify what additional support they would value longer term. The Cabinet Member noted that home working arrangements would continue to be kept under review

based on the Government's latest guidance on Covid Secure working arrangements and the need to continue social distancing.

As a supplementary question Councillor Carter welcomed the high number of staff working successfully at home and asked that while this was a temporary measure and as services had continued to function, was the Council looking at enabling permanent home working?

In response the Cabinet Member noted that the current arrangements were temporary and that due to the evolving pandemic it was hard to predict what would happen in the future but noted that the Council had always supported flexible working practices for staff.

10. Councillor Carter asked the Cabinet Member for Cleaner, Greener Communities "As the Council has recognised, Ash Dieback is affecting our Borough's trees. Does the Council commit to a policy where removed trees are replaced with sufficient trees to make the process carbon neutral or better?".

In response the Cabinet Member for Cleaner, Greener Communities advised that the problem of Ash Dieback had been noted and that it had received full consideration in the discussions of the Climate Emergency Working Group. The work of the Group had resulted in an action plan being developed that included targets for carbon capture over the next decade, with an aim of carbon neutrality for the Borough and the implementation of a tree planting strategy. The Cabinet Member advised that the Council was committed to, and had ensured that where trees were removed, more trees were always replanted than had been removed.

As a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked for confirmation that while not currently the case that policies were in place to move the Borough to a position of carbon neutrality or better. The Cabinet Member advised that this was partly true as actions were still being developed but noted that with regard to planning applications part of the negotiations with developers now always included discussions on how tree planting could be maximised.

11. Councillor Napper asked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance "The now defunct Just Yorkshire and Rethinking Prevent charities have been given an official warning due to misconduct or mismanagement with regards to unauthorised payments to trustees. Rethinking Prevent was also accused of promoting extremist viewpoints: - so has RMBC had any involvement with these 2 charities and have they received any monies in the past from RMBC?"

In response the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance advised that the Council had not had any involvement with these charities and stated they had not received any money from the Council in the past. The Cabinet Member noted that a charity called "Just West Yorkshire",

which records suggested was the same charity as Just Yorkshire, had held premises in Rotherham between October 2016 and September 2019.

There was no supplementary question.

12. Councillor Carter asked the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy “With Government funding being devolved for active travel schemes, how does the Council plan to use this money and what will the impact be on the current road infrastructure?”

In response the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy advised that the Council had received confirmation of funding for Emergency Active Travel Funding based on two tranches of support. Tranche One had already been granted and was being used to support social distancing measures in town and district centres based on a set of plans developed in June 2020. The Cabinet Member noted that typically this work comprised of Town Centre signage to support retail recovery as well as temporarily widening footways using coning and temporary barriers and signage where queuing risks were identified. The Cabinet Member noted that these have met with mixed levels of support and acceptance and as such some have been removed.

The Cabinet Member advised that plans for Tranche Two funding were being drawn up and were scheduled to be submitted to Government by the 7th August deadline. The Cabinet Member noted that, if approved, the funding was expected to amount to approximately £1.5million and would be used to establish and improve cycling and walking measures along one or more routes into the Town Centre as well as for local active travel measures within residential locations.

As a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked what the impact of the current and proposed measures would be on the current road network and road users. In response the Cabinet Member advised that active travel was always beneficial, and that the Council was doing as much as possible to promote initiatives that both encouraged healthy travel but also improved safety.

13. Councillor Napper asked the Leader “WYG Consultants have been engaged to carry out a survey on Eastwood, can the Leader tell us what will the cost to RMBC for their services?”

In response the Leader advised there would be no cost to the Council and that the work that WYG had been carrying out was funded by Government as part of the work to develop a Towns Deal proposal for submission to the Government in October. The Leader noted that the work covered an area across the wider Town Centre area including Eastwood and Templeborough and was essential in order to give the Council the best possible opportunity to secure up to £50 million of Government funding to enable a number of projects that would be presented through the Town Investment Plan.

There was no supplementary question.

14. Councillor Carter asked the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy “What effect does the council think that the coronavirus pandemic will have on the Forge Island redevelopment?”

In response the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy advised that the Forge Island scheme was continuing to progress well, noting that planning permission had been granted in July 2020 and that occupier interest remained strong. The Cabinet Member advised that there was every reason to be optimistic about the future of the scheme. The Cabinet Member noted that the development included high quality outdoor public spaces and areas for eating and drinking and that Forge Island was well placed to provide exactly the type of environment customers would be happy to visit post-pandemic.

As a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked what the Council was doing to ensure that residents would be able to benefit from free on-site parking when using the facilities. In response the Cabinet Member advised that the Council was working with the cinema operator with regard to the provision of parking.

15. Councillor Napper asked the Leader “RMBC is supposed to be open and transparent, so can the Leader tell us why no-one was informed when the decision was taken to demolish the Old Hall at Bramley?”

In response the Leader advised that he had not been informed either and that he had learnt of the proposed demolition at the same time as everyone else.

The Leader advised that Planning permission as such was not required to demolish the Old Hall at Bramley, adding that as the building was privately owned, was not a Listed Building and was not within a Conservation Area, planning permission as the term was generally understood was not required. The Leader noted that prior to the demolition of the building, the owner would have to notify the Council about the method of demolition and proposed restoration of the site, with the Council then having 28 days to consider whether the details of the demolition and of how the site would be restored once the building has been demolished were acceptable or not.

The Leader advised that the actual decision to demolish this building was not something that could be taken into account. The Leader advised that as part of the notification procedure the applicant was required to display a site notice for a period of 21 days that contained certain information, but that as the notice that had been originally displayed had not satisfied these minimum information requirements the process would have to be repeated.

The Leader advised in order to ensure better information sharing with Elected Members that in future such notifications would be included in the planning list information that was circulated to members.

There was no supplementary question.

16. Councillor Carter asked the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy “With unemployment rising as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic, how does the Council leadership plan to support those residents who now find themselves without work?”

In response the Leader noted the seriousness of the current economic situation for many residents and advised that the Council would work with DWP, Job Centre Plus, colleges, training providers and the voluntary sector to put in place support for residents who found themselves out of work. The Leader noted that the Council had worked closely with partners across the Sheffield City Region in order to develop a City Region Renewal Action Plan that supported economic recovery and advised that the Council had strongly advocated that the economic impact on people and communities should be a major focus of the Plan. The Leader stated that he was pleased to report that the Council’s proposals had been supported by partners from across the region and that as such a detailed proposal had gone forward to Government describing a series of measures to help people find jobs and adapt to the new economy.

As a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked what lobbying activity was planned to obtain financial support in enable for programmes to be delivered that would enable residents to retrain for different jobs.

In response the Leader noted that lobbying activity was taken place and provided information on elements of the Renewal Action Plan that included Train to Work, Back to Work, the Young People’s Skill Guarantee Post and the Overcome Barriers scheme that would work to support residents get back into sustainable employment.

17. Councillor Napper asked the Chair of the Planning Board “Planning permission was sought two or three times for the Old Hall, Bramley, only to be told that it was not in keeping with Bramley and planning refused. So can the question be asked, and we be informed, what exactly would be in keeping with planning for Bramley?”

In response the Chair of the Planning Board advised that Councillor Napper had been misinformed and that Planning permission for the site had been approved in October 2016 for the refurbishment and conversion of the existing building to form four dwellings together with the erection of two new dwellings. The Chair noted that this permission had expired in October 2019 and that no further applications had been submitted to the Council. The Chair advised that it was understood from a structural survey submitted to the Council that the building was no longer suitable for conversion and that also a notification to demolish the building was

pending. It was noted that discussions were ongoing with the landowner in respect to the redevelopment of the site.

The Chair noted that as the site had been allocated for residential development the principle of residential use of the site was acceptable, however, due to there being a Listed Building adjacent to the site any redevelopment would have to be sensitive to that building. The Chair noted further than it would also be necessary, considering the character of the surrounding area that any proposed development would likely to be restricted to two storeys in height with separation distances and outside space incorporated in accordance with the Council's Standard that were set out in the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide.

There was no supplementary question.

18. Councillor Carter asked the Leader "Will the Council Leader on behalf of his group condemn both Labour MPs who represent Rotherham residents for not joining the 'Excluded UK' All-Party Parliamentary Group, who are working cross-party to fight for three million residents who have been left out by the Government's coronavirus financial support schemes?". In asking his question Councillor Carter qualified his question by noting that since he had submitted his question it was one Labour MP.

In response the Leader stated that he was not aware of the full membership details of this group but noted that most MP's were members of numerous groups of this type. The Leader advised that Labour MP's had been at the forefront of calls on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to extend the Government's financial support schemes and that John Healey MP had made representations to the Chancellor regarding support for the self-employed.

As a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked how the Council would work to support residents who had not been eligible for any of the Government's financial support schemes.

In response the Leader advised that the Council had been working hard to distribute the funds that it had been allocated to those who were entitled to receive the support. The Leader noted that via the Council's Discretionary Business Support Fund ,around £4million had been distributed to small businesses who had missed out on previous schemes and advised that the Council would continue to work within its resources to support residents.

19. Councillor Cowles asked the Deputy Leader "Social mobility campaigners are urging the setup of selective sixth forms to boost the chances of deprived children outside the capital of attending an elite university. Increased numbers of these schools are transforming the lives of disadvantaged children. MP's state this is a priority. When can we expect to see adoption of this policy?"

In response the Deputy Leader advised that this would never happen.

As a supplementary question Councillor Cowles asked that as selective sixth forms were being rejected, how could high achievers at Rotherham's schools be assisted most effectively as many high achievers did not maximise their potential due to the lack of effective guidance on choosing the best courses and the best universities. Councillor Cowles also asked how many young people in Rotherham went on to attend "Russell Group" universities.

The Deputy Leader advised that the establishment of selective sixth forms would need to be a 'free school' application and therefore would come through an existing Academy, ideally with experience of post-16 provision. The Deputy Leader noted that given the recent reduction in post-16 funding, any such applications would need to target an existing wide catchment, which was currently well provided for across Rotherham and, therefore, any new provision would be entering into a highly competitive market.

The Deputy Leader advised that whilst he would want to see more students from Rotherham applying and entering highly selective universities, evidence suggested that the key reasons for low entry into these institutions was not due to any lack of breadth of provision available, but more often because of the associated costs and barriers associated with low income families being able to afford the cost of attending such universities and the legacy costs connected to the repayment of any costs incurred during the study period.

20. Councillor Cowles asked the Cabinet Member for Housing "Selective Licensing has been in place for a full term. How many landlords, for whatever infringement of this Policy, have had one or more licenses revoked?"

In response the Cabinet Member for Housing advised that 238 Selective Licenses had been revoked since May 2015 and noted that that number included landlords that had breached conditions of the License, together with where landlords for a property had changed during the lifetime of the Licence.

The Cabinet Member stated that mandatory Selective Licensing of private rented housing had been shown to be a successful tool to improve standards of rented property, both locally and nationally and as such the Scheme had been extended for a further five years. This was supported through the decision to designate a number of Selective Licensing areas for a five years period which had commenced this year. The Cabinet Member noted that when the previous Selective Licensing Scheme began, over 90% of properties inspected had not met minimum legal standards, but by the end of the Scheme over 95% of properties had been compliant, with those that were not complaint going through a formal process for improvement. The Cabinet Member stated that he hoped the

extended scheme to Thurcroft and Parkgate would bring the benefits of Selective Licensing to those communities.

As a supplementary question Councillor Cowles noted that whilst Selective Licensing had improved housing, it had not improved communities as a whole and asked how a landlord had not been aware that his property was being used as a cannabis farm.

In response the Cabinet Member asked that Councillor Cowles should raise any questions he had on specific cases with him outside of the meeting but noted that Selective Licensing had been effective and revoking licences where breaches had occurred.

21. Councillor Cowles asked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance “A few weeks ago, ex-Councillor Vines published a letter in the local paper highlighting significant sums of money provided by RMBC as grants to various groups. Additionally, the letter indicated that there had been little or no scrutiny of how the money was spent. Can you assure us that this was not the case?”

In response the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance advised that it was clear from his letter what former Councillor Vines had been trying to suggest where he had highlighted a number of groups that supported black and minority ethnic people that had received money from the Council, grants that in most cases had been made many years ago. The Cabinet Member stated that the assertion that the Council had given Voluntary Action Rotherham £6 million made by former Councillor Vines was false and that while the Council had provided money for Magna, former Councillor Vines had at the time advocated higher levels of financial support. The Cabinet Member stated that the current administration had five years ago brought in a system that introduced a competitive grants process that was supported by strict financial safeguards that ensured a high degree of assurance regarding value for money.

As a supplementary question Councillor Cowles asked that given how the Leader had advised that questions are always answered, why had the Cabinet Member failed to answer the question he had asked fully. Councillor Cowles noted that he had not been given any assurance on the robustness of the process and scrutiny surrounding the allocation of such substantial sums.

The Cabinet Member noted his disagreement with this statement and advised that all processes were fully accountable.

378. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for consideration.

COUNCIL MEETING - 22/07/20

Before closing the meeting, the Mayor wished to place on record the thanks of the Council to the outgoing Head of Democratic Services, James McLaughlin, who was leaving the Council in August to become Director of Corporate and Customer Services at Derbyshire Dales District Council.

Councillor Chris Read – Leader of the Council

Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE
Tel: (01709) 822700
E-mail: chris.read@rotherham.gov.uk
Email the Council for free @ your local library!

Our Ref:	Direct Line:	Extension:	Please Contact:
CR/EJH	(01709) 822700	22770	Councillor Chris Read

23rd July 2020

Mr Marcus Wheatcroft

By email

Dear Mr Wheatcroft

Council Meeting – 22nd July 2020

Thank you for submitting a question for the above Council meeting.

You ask “*Does RMBC now accept their leave of absence from responsibility has allowed a conflict situation to grow between enforcement and the public? Is now the time for the Leader to pack up and go home?*”

In line with our established policy, because you did not attend the Council meeting to ask the question, I am responding in writing, and my answer will be published with the Council’s minutes for a formal record.

To the best of my knowledge, you and I have never met, nor been in correspondence. I do not know what your question refers to, and I have no way of establishing the subject matter.

If you do wish to raise an issue with me, other than your kind request for my resignation, you would be most welcome to contact my office who will see if anything can be done to assist.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Chris Read
Leader of Rotherham Council