

**COUNCIL MEETING**  
**2nd March, 2022**

Present:- The Mayor (Councillor Jenny Andrews) (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Allen, Atkin, Aveyard, Bacon, Baker-Rogers, Ball, Barker, Barley, Baum-Dixon, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, Burnett, A Carter, C Carter, Castledine-Dack, Clark, T. Collingham, Z. Collingham, Cooksey, Cowen, Cusworth, Elliott, Fisher, Griffin, Haleem, Havard, Hoddinott, Hunter, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Mills, Monk, Read, Reynolds, Roche, Sheppard, Tarmey, Taylor, Thompson, Tinsley, Wooding, Wyatt and Yasseen.

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

**118. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor referred with sadness to the events that were unfolding in Ukraine and asked all present to join with her in showing that the Council and Rotherham stood in solidarity with the people of Ukraine by giving a round of applause.

The Mayor advised that she had been honoured to be re-inducted as Honorary Rotarian by the Sitwell Rotary Club and noted how she had enjoyed hearing about the activities and achievements of the charities that they supported at the meeting.

The Mayor referred to the many Mayoral events that she and the Mayoress had attended since the previous Council meeting, including:

- Attending the Explorer Scouts presentation meeting.
- Visiting a resident of the Borough to help her celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.
- Attending a performance of Cinderella performed by the Dinnington Operatic Society.
- Visiting the Anne Frank exhibition at Brinsworth Academy and marking Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January with the release of a video on social media.
- Welcoming the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire, Professor Dame Hilary Chapman, to the Town Hall in early February.
- Joining the Wah Hong Chinese Association's first outdoor traditional lion dance in Rotherham's covered outdoor market to celebrate Chinese New Year.
- Attending the relaunch of Greasbrough Library.

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- Judging the Beer of the Festival Competition at the Rotherham Real Ale and Music Festival.

### **119. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ellis, Hughes, Miro, Pitchley, Sansome, Whomersley and Wilson.

### **120. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were none.

### **121. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING**

**Resolved:** - That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 12th January, 2022, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester referred to Minute Nos. 103 and 112 and wished to place on record his comments, which were both acknowledged by the Leader and Councillor Roche about those areas that shouted the loudest receiving more support and hard targeting of sports activities for deprived neighbourhoods and moving this forward. Both the Leader and Councillor Roche would ensure these views were taken into account.

Mover: - Councillor Read

Seconder: - Councillor Allen

### **122. PETITIONS**

There were no petitions.

### **123. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **124. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no questions from members of the public.

### **125. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.

### **126. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT**

The Leader opened his statement by welcoming everyone back to the first meeting of Council to be held in the Council Chamber since March 2020, noting how good it was to be back.

The Leader referred to the conflict in the Ukraine and how the conflict was a fight for democracy and for democratic processes. The Leader stated that despite the differences of opinion that would be expressed in today's meeting, the meeting showed the value and importance of democratic processes. The Leader noted how everyone's thoughts would be with the people of the Ukraine.

The Leader advised that whilst the remaining legal requirements regarding Covid-19 had come to an end, that it was important to remember that Covid-19 had not gone away, and that although case numbers were continuing to decrease that everyone should still do everything possible to mitigate any risk of infection going forward.

The Leader noted his congratulations to Councillor Brookes and her husband Chris on their recent wedding and extended his, and the meeting's best wishes to them. The Leader also noted his congratulations to Councillors Adam and Charlotte Carter whose baby son had been born just a few days previously.

The Leader advised that over the coming weeks that there were lots of great events happening across the Borough including:

- From the beginning of February to 8th March, a further 6 libraries would have been re-launched following refurbishments of the buildings and their facilities. This was part of the Borough-wide libraries £1.8m capital investment programme that had seen a packed programme of activities for both adults and younger residents.
- Earlier in March the first home had been completed in the Council's ambitious £30m+ development of more than 170 homes across 3 key Town Centre sites. The project had been partly funded by Homes England and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and had seen over £200,000 of added social value including work with local schools and colleges and support to local charities. The Leader noted that this was a really exciting project and that it was a first glimpse of a future Rotherham that would help bring to life the vision that the Council had for a thriving town centre of the future.
- The launch of the Rotherham Children's Capital of Culture programme. The Leader noted that the Town Centre had been transformed into a playground with a skate and arts festival, demonstrations by Team GB skaters and BMX pros, and a robot selfie. The Leader noted that these events had been delivered by part of the £1.4m funding that had been received through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester expressed his support for the people of the Ukraine and advised how former Rotherham Titans player and BBC reporter James Waterhouse should be in everyone's thoughts whilst he was doing important work in keeping everyone informed on what was

happening in the conflict. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester stated how he hoped that James would be home and safe very soon.

Councillor Tinsley advised that he was supporting an appeal that would be taking items via Poland to support people in the Ukraine who were being impacted by the conflict there and asked whether the Council would support this appeal. In response the Leader stated that the Council was advising that the best way for residents of the Borough to support to the people of the Ukraine was in the form of financial donations to recognised charities. The Leader also advised that the Council would be looking at what other options for supporting the people of the Ukraine may be available.

**127. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS**

Councillor Bennett Sylvester asked with regard to Minute No.97 whether the potential for disused railway lines to be utilised to enhance the Borough's cycle network could be considered.

Councillor Beck, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, noted that the Cycling Strategy would enable all options for enhancing the Borough's cycle network to be looked at and advised that he was open to any suggestions on how the network could be further developed.

**Resolved:** - That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 24th January and 14th February, 2022, be received.

Mover: - Councillor Read

Seconder: - Councillor Allen

**128. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2022-23 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE**

Further to Minute No.107 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14th February, 2022, consideration was given to the report that proposed the Council's Budget and Council Tax for 2022/23.

The proposed Budget and Council Tax for 2022/23 had been based on the outcome of the Council's Final Local Government Finance Settlement, budget consultation process and consideration of Directorate budget proposals through the Council's formal Budget and Scrutiny processes (Overview and Scrutiny Management Board), alongside a review of the financial planning assumptions within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. It was stated in the report that in setting the proposed 2022/23 budget, Cabinet had recommended an increase of 1.5% in the Council's basic Council Tax and an Adult Social Care precept of 3.0%. The report proposed the revenue budget for 2022/23, an updated Capital Programme to 2025/26 and the updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025/26.

In moving the budget report the Leader noted his thanks to Councillor Alam, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance, and all the Elected Members who had contributed to the development of the proposed Budget 2022/23. The Leader also noted his thanks to the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services and her team for their support in the proposed budget's development. The Leader noted his particular thanks to the Assistant Director for Financial Services, Graham Saxton, for his advice and support over many years in advance of his imminent retirement from the Council.

The Leader advised that the proposed budget reaped the benefits of the difficult financial choices that had been taken in previous years and also set the Council and the Borough on the right course following the Covid-19 pandemic. The Leader stated that the proposed budget was both a prudent budget and one that supported the Borough's most vulnerable residents. The Leader advised that the proposed budget reflected the impact on the Council's finances of the pandemic and of 12 years of austerity and the impact that these events had had on the most vulnerable residents and communities across the Borough.

The Leader noted that the delivery of Adult Social Care Services would remain the most significant area of pressure for the Council's finances in the coming year and stated that new Government policies with regard to the funding of Adult Care Services had the potential to add even further pressure to the Adult Social Care budget. The Leader advised that the proposed budget contained significant budget increases for payments to home care providers and the provision of Learning Disability Services, as well as enabling home care personal assistants to be paid the Real Living Wage. The Leader noted that due to increases in demand for services, that the funding received by the Council from the Government their delivery would be insufficient, and as such it had been necessary to propose and increase in the Adult Social Care element of the Council Tax in order to ensure that services could continue to be delivered.

The Leader stated that in spite of the challenging financial situation and ongoing uncertainties that, due to good financial management over many years, there was now an opportunity to invest in services that would improve the quality of life for residents across the Borough, including extra investment in:

- Youth Services
- Libraries, including extra money for books and improved facilities
- the Neighbourhood Road Safety programme
- Streetscene Services
- Licensing
- Planning Enforcement
- Social Workers to work with children and young people at risk of criminal exploitation.
- the provision of school uniform for families in receipt of free school meals when children transitioned schools.

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The Leader stated that the proposed increase in Council Tax would mean an average increase of 93p a week in bills for households across the Borough. The Leader advised that the extra support with Council Tax that was being proposed in the budget for the poorest families across the Borough would mean that approximately 10,500 families would not pay any Council Tax in 2022/23.

The Leader noted the current cost of living crisis and advised that in the coming weeks there would be further announcements of how the Council would support families with rising energy bills.

In concluding his remarks the Leader stated that whilst the future held many uncertainties, that the proposed budget delivered on the priorities of the people of Rotherham.

In seconding the budget report Councillor Alam, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance, advised that the proposed budget was a responsible budget that put the priorities of the residents of the Borough first. Councillor Alam noted that, due to ongoing financial challenges, the proposed budget contained proposals that were financially responsible but that also enabled the delivery of the Council's and resident's priorities. Councillor Alam stated that the proposed budget was an inclusive budget that would work to reduce inequality and promote social justice across the Borough.

Councillor Alam stated that whilst the delivery of the savings that were detailed in the budget and that were required due to reductions in Government funding over many years would be challenging, that they also provided the opportunity to deliver services in a more creative way that were also more open and transparent to residents.

Councillor Alam advised that the proposed budget was a positive budget that would, in spite of Government cuts to funding, support residents, and in particular the most vulnerable residents across the Borough who had been most impacted by Government cuts to Council funding.

In concluding his remarks Councillor Alam thanked the Leader, members of the Budget Working Group, members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services and her team for their support in the development of the proposed Budget for 2022/23.

At this point it was moved by Councillor Tarmey and seconded by Councillor A. Carter

"That the Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 report be accepted as proposed, with the exception of the following amendments to:

1. Appendix 2 Proposed Revenue Investments 2022/23:
  - 1.1. 22/23 R&E14 - Town Centre Management Fund. Remove this £70,000 investment proposal.
  - 1.2. 22/23 CYPS2 - Universal Youth Work. Increase this proposed investment by £70,000 from £180,000 to £250,000. To be funded by the removal of the Town Centre Management Fund investment. The additional investment is to be used for the purpose of expanding Voluntary & Community Sector commissioning.
2. Appendix 3C to 3F Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26. Using £3,099,540 of the £4.1m Transformation Corporate Reserve to fund the following Capital investments:
  - 2.1. Borough-wide Tree Planting Programme – Appendix 3D. Increase the 2022/23 budget from £200,000 to £250,000, an additional cost of £50,000. (CLT001).
  - 2.2. Capital Investment Ward Budgets – Appendix 3D. Increase 2022/23 budget from £10,680 to £21,360 for each of the three member wards, at an additional total cost of £96,120. (CPC008, 009, 014, 015, 017, 018, 019, 020, 037).
  - 2.3. Capital Investment Ward Budgets – Appendix 3D. Increase 2022/23 budget from £7,120 to £14,240 for each of the two Member Wards, at an additional total cost of £113,920. (CPC010, 013, 022, 029, 030, 031, 032, 033, 034, 035, 036, 038, 039, 040, 041, 042).
  - 2.4. Operational Building Decarbonisation - Appendix 3D. Accelerate the planned programme by bringing forward to 2022/23 £1.7m of investment currently allocated in 2025/26 (reducing the 2025/26 spend to £0). This will result in a total investment in 2022/23 of £3.2m. (CSB008).
  - 2.5. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Expansion - Appendix 3D. Increase 2022/23 budget from £173,000 to £225,000, an additional £52,000, achieved by doubling the Residential Charging Infrastructure budget line from £52,000 to £104,000. (CSB009).
  - 2.6. 2020-2024 Roads Programme £24m - Appendix 3D. Increase 2022/23 budget from £6m to £6.7m an additional increase of £0.7m. (CGR008).
  - 2.7. Implement a 25% discount to the price of the Garden Waste Collection Service for Rothercard holders on a trial basis for 2022/23. The discount will apply to the first bin only at an

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estimated cost of £387,500. Additionally, those households who have already paid for the service would be refunded the value of the discount should they subsequently apply for and receive a Rothercard within the financial year 2022/23.”

In moving the amendment Councillor Tarmey stated that, whilst he was largely supportive of the proposed budget and of its objectives, that the proposed amendment sought to address some concerns about some particular parts of it. Councillor Tarmey advised that as the Council’s financial reserves were in such a good position that part of the Transformation Reserve should be spent in supporting residents. Councillor Tarmey noted that this spending would still leave the Council’s reserves in an overall healthy state. Councillor Tarmey noted that it was essential that spending was focussed on priorities that would directly support resident and not on “vanity projects” such as the Town Centre Management Fund and its related schemes.

In seconding the amendment Councillor A. Carter noted that, whilst the Council had made some progress in addressing climate change and in supporting vulnerable residents and young people, that more should be done to address these priority areas. Councillor A. Carter stated whilst he supportive of the overall direction of the budget, that the proposals that it contained were not bold enough in their ambition. Councillor A. Carter also advised that it was essential that more should be done in empowering local communities to be able influence decisions that impacted on their area.

In response to the proposed amendment Councillor Allen stated how passionate she was about the proposed Town Centre improvements, noting that these were far from “vanity projects” and how they would have positive impact on residents and communities. Councillor Beck stated that it appeared that the Liberal Democrats wanted to do more of what Labour were proposing, but in way that irresponsibly used the Council’s reserves.

Councillor Barley stated that she was unable to support the proposed amendment as whilst she was supportive of the proposed increases in spending on Youth Services, that she would like to see the Council’s reserves spent differently. Councillor Roche noted that whilst he was supportive of the sentiments of the proposed amendment in that it was supportive of the overall objectives of the proposed Labour budget, the Council’s reserves should only be used to support spending commitments when absolutely necessary.

Councillor Hoddinott advised that the Council had made very substantial investments in the Borough’s roads over recent years and that the proposed increases in spending contained in the proposed budget amendment were very small in comparison. Councillor Hoddinott also noted that whilst the proposed Liberal Democrat amendment included increases in spending on Youth Services, that the Liberal Democrats when in Government had supported



massive cuts to Youth services that were still being felt to the present day. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester advised that he could not support the proposed amendment as he had not been given sufficient time to consider it in detail and asked that in future years that proposed budget amendments were shared with Members further in advance of the Council meeting in order for them to be studied in more detail by Members.

Councillor Alam stated that the proposed Town Centre improvements were far from being a “vanity project” and would build and develop the Town Centre in a way that would bring new communities together. Councillor Yasseen noted her support for the investments that were being proposed in the Labour budget to develop the Town Centre and that would create greater cohesiveness between businesses and residents. Councillor Cusworth stated that the 2010 Coalition Government, of which the Liberal Democrats had been part, had decimated Youth Services, and as such it would take significant investment and time to repair the damage that had been done. Councillor Atkin stated that the Council’s decarbonisation targets were already incredibly ambitious and that it was an unrealistic proposal to try and accelerate these further.

The Leader stated that whilst it may be tempting to use reserves to pay for services, that the reality of this was that the routine spending of reserves risked putting the Council in a precarious financial situation where it was at risk of being reliant on Government support and the subsequent loss of autonomy that came with such support. The Leader thanked Councillor Tarmey for his supportive comments about the overall direction of the proposed Labour budget but advised that he would be unable to support the proposed amendment.

In response to the points raised in the debate on the amendment, Councillor Tarmey noted how much common ground that the Liberal Democrats shared with Labour on many social issues. Councillor Tarmey noted his frustration that the Council was holding large amounts of reserves, some of which it was not legally required to do so when the money could be being invested in supporting communities across the Borough. In concluding his comments Councillor Tarmey thanked the Strategic Director, Finance and Customer Services, and her team for the technical support that they had provided in the development of the proposed budget amendment.

On being put the vote the amendment was lost.

At this point it was proposed by Councillor Barley and seconded by Councillor Z Collingham:

“That the Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 report be accepted as proposed, with the exception of an amendment to provide a further Council Tax Discount for 2022/23, to be applied after all other Council Tax discounts, the Council Tax Support Scheme, and the proposed Council Tax support top-up for 2022/23. The maximum discount is to be the

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amount of the 4.5% increase in Rotherham Council's Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept from 2021/22 to 2022/23 for the relevant Council Tax Band (£72.66 at band D). The discount is not to be applied to Town and Parish Council Precepts, the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Precept and the South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority Precept.

The cost of the proposal is estimated to be £5.2m and will be funded by the use of the £4.1m Transformation reserve and £1.1m from the Budget and Financial Strategy reserve.

This would be implemented with the following approach:

- Those liable to pay a full Council Tax bill with no discounts, will have a discount equivalent to the value of the 4.5% increase in Council Tax from 2021/22 to 2022/23 applied to their bill. As such their amount to pay in regard to the RMBC element of the bill will not increase from 2021/22 to 2022/23.
- Those liable to pay a Council Tax bill with existing discounts, including the LCTS Top Up scheme, will have a discount equivalent to the value of the 4.5% increase in Council Tax from 2021/22 to 2022/23 applied to their bill. However, this discount will be provided on a pro-rata basis. For example, someone on maximum LCTS support has their bill discounted by 91.5%, leaving them with 8.5% of the bill to pay. This proposal would then apply 8.5% of the value of the proposed Council Tax increase from 2021/22 to 2022/23 to their bill as a further discount. As a Band D example, the increase in Band D bills from 2021/22 to 2022/23 for the Rotherham Council's Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept element is £72.66, 8.5% as a discount would be £6.18.
- The discount applied relates to the full financial year, as such if the bill payer's situation changes, e.g. they should leave the Borough during the year or their situation changes in another way, then their discount will be adjusted on a pro-rata basis.
- In all scenarios the discount applied can only be used to reduce the Council Tax bill, as a maximum, to a net nil bill.
- Implementation of the above to take place through a rebilling exercise later in the year once the necessary software changes have been made and tested. This means the discount would not be included in the annual billing to take place in March."

In moving the amendment Councillor Barley noted the unprecedented cost of living crisis that was getting worse by the day, where those residents who were struggling already would be struggling even more, and those residents who had been managing were starting to struggle. Councillor Barley advised that in this situation the Council should be doing

everything that it could to assist residents and not be putting more money into reserves. Councillor Barley advised that proposed budget amendment would ensure that no household in the Borough would be paying more Council Tax in 2022/23 than they had in 2021/22. Councillor Barley stated that in most circumstances the funding of such a decision would involve difficult decisions regarding cutting services to deliver savings, but that in the current situation such choices would not need to be made as the Council could fund this proposal from its substantial reserves. Councillor Barley noted that it was wholly appropriate for Council reserves to not just to be used when the Council was in financial difficulties but when residents were facing financial difficulties also. Councillor Barley concluded in thanking the Strategic Director, Finance and Customer Services, and her team for the technical support that they had provided in the development of the proposed budget amendment.

In seconding the amendment Councillor Z. Collingham stated that, in light of the cost of living crisis, the Council should be looking at bold and innovative ways in which to support the residents of the Borough and that it should be freezing Council Tax, rather than increasing it. Councillor Z. Collingham stated that the proposed amendment would enable for all the proposed spending commitments detailed in the Labour budget to be delivered whilst also helping to relieve some of the financial pressures that were currently being felt by residents. Councillor Z. Collingham noted that as the Council currently held around £60million in reserves that it was not financially irresponsible to spend just £5million of those reserves to support every household across the Borough. Councillor Z. Collingham noted that as reserves were kept for a rainy day, and as that rainy day had now arrived that it was right to spend those reserves to support residents.

Councillor Roche stated that the proposed amendment was very short term in its focus as the Council's reserves were not endless and it did not consider the future impact on residents who would be faced with larger Council Tax increases in the future. Councillor Roche noted that that the cost of living crisis was being caused by increases in fuel, gas and electricity prices and increases in National Insurance contributions, and not increases in Council Tax.

Councillor Baum-Dixon stated that the proposed budget amendment would deliver a freeze in Council Tax and would also enable spending to be delivered on Council services. Councillor Baum-Dixon reiterated that as reserves were kept for a rainy day, and as that rainy day had now arrived that it was right to spend those reserves to support residents. Councillor Baum-Dixon stated that the proposed budget had been fully costed and that as the Transformation Reserve, where the required budget for the Council Tax freeze would be taken from was not a statutory reserve, then it was right to use it to support residents at their time of need.

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Councillor Lelliott stated that the cost of living crisis had been created by the current Conservative Government who had cut Universal Credit payments and were also planning to increase National Insurance contributions. Councillor Lelliott questioned why the Conservative Opposition was not lobbying the Government to do more about the cost of living crisis and stated that a one-year freeze in Council Tax was just a headline grabbing gimmick.

Councillor Hoddinott noted that the Conservative Government had long been ignoring the crisis surrounding the funding of Social Care and that the current cost of living crisis had been created by the choices that had been made by the Conservative Government. Councillor Hoddinott advised that whilst the Council's reserves were in a healthy position, they were not endless, and that in light of the pandemic and other global events, it was unclear what financial challenges that the Council could face in the future where it may have to utilise its reserves. Councillor A. Carter noted that in his view the proposed Conservative amendment offered very little in that it only proposed a different way of paying for Labour's proposals, and not any different proposals themselves. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester advised that he could not support the proposed amendment as he had not been given sufficient time to consider it in detail and asked that in future years that proposed budget amendments were shared with Members further in advance in order to enable a more informed debate.

The Leader stated that he would have taken the Conservative amendment more seriously had they been proposing to fund the freeze in Council Tax by making budget savings elsewhere, rather than proposing to keep spending as was being proposed but being funded from reserves. The Leader noted the difficult budget choices that the Council had had to make over the previous 12 years as a result of Government cuts and how these had impacted on residents. The Leader stated that the proposed freeze in Council Tax would not support the most vulnerable households in the Borough as the 10,500 worse off households in the Borough would not be paying any Council Tax in 2022/23 anyway under the proposed Labour budget. The Leader also questioned what a freeze in Council Tax in 2022/23 would mean for future years and noted it would result in either a 7.5% Council Tax rise in 2023/24 or in cuts to services. Councillor Baker-Rodgers advised that she could not support the proposed amendment and asked how the Conservative Opposition could make such a proposal when the Conservative Government had cut £20 a week from the income of those residents in receipt of Universal Credit.

Councillor Cusworth noted her opposition to the proposed amendment and stated that the proposed Labour budget would deliver on the priorities of residents whilst also protecting the Borough's most vulnerable families. Councillor Cusworth stated that the proposed Conservative amendment was hypocritical given how the Conservative Opposition had failed to support the Labour motion at Council in 2021 that stated the Council's opposition to the removal of the £20 uplift to Universal Credit. Councillor

Cusworth also noted her agreement with the Leader in that the proposed amendment would do nothing to support the most vulnerable residents in the Borough. Councillor Cusworth stated that the cost of living crisis and the other difficulties faced by residents across the Borough had been caused by the choices made by the Conservative Government. Councillor Cusworth stated that the Labour administration had been making difficult financial choices for many years, and as such it would not be financially responsible to start using reserves to support spending.

Councillor Tarmey noted that whilst he believed that the value of the Council's Transformation Reserve was perhaps slightly too high, that the money held in it should not be spent irresponsibly either on a Council Tax freeze that would result in a large Council Tax increase in 2022/23 and that did not target support towards the Borough's most vulnerable residents.

In response to the points raised in the debate on the amendment, Councillor Barley noted that the proposed amendment was a short term solution that had been proposed in response to the cost of living crisis facing Rotherham residents. Councillor Barley noted further that it was the role of all Elected Members to do whatever they could to support residents at a time of crisis. Councillor Barley reaffirmed that the proposed amendment struck a good balance between delivering and protecting services and in supporting residents at a time of crisis.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

The meeting now discussed the original substantive motion that had been moved by the Leader, Councillor Read and seconded by Councillor Alam.

Councillor Sheppard commended the budget and noted some of the investments that were planned in his Cabinet portfolio of responsibility of Social Inclusion including the expanded programme of tree planting across the Borough and the continued investment in Rotherham's Libraries. Councillor Sheppard also advised how pleased he was that investments would be made in developing events during 2022/23, including the Rotherham Show and noted his anticipation of Rotherham hosting games during the Women's Euro 2022 Championships.

Councillor Roche, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, noted the challenges that the previous 2 years of the pandemic had created and thanked staff across Adult Social Care and Health for their work in meeting the unprecedented challenges that they had faced. In noting his support for the proposed budget Councillor Roche drew attention to the plans to increase the wages of home care staff and how this would assist in addressing staff shortages in this area. Councillor Roche advised that whilst the overall budget for Adult Social Care was increasing in 2022/23, challenges in the delivery of services would remain as the demand for services and the number of individuals with complex cases continued to increase.

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Councillor Lelliott, Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy, stated her support for the budget and noted how the proposals regarding free Town Centre parking would support the local economy and small businesses. Councillor Lelliott also highlighted the planned increased investment in vital services including Planning Enforcement and Licensing as well as the planned investment in decarbonising the Council's buildings that would help the Council to achieve its challenging net zero targets. Councillor Lelliott also noted the success that the Council had had in accessing external funding to add to the budget that had been allocated to invest in the Town Centre.

Councillor Beck, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, brought to the attention of the meeting several areas of proposed investment in his portfolio area including increased spending on road safety initiatives and on grass cutting and weeding. Councillor Beck noted the additional £500,000 that had been allocated in the proposed budget for the Streetscene Service that would enable the Service to have a permanent workforce and how this would enable the Service to deliver on the priorities of residents for their local areas. Councillor Beck also noted that the popular programme of wildflower verges on the Borough's roads would be doubled in its size during 2022/23.

Councillor Cusworth, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, stated that whilst the Council had made huge improvements in its delivery of Children and Young People's Services, that it still faced a number of challenges. Councillor Cusworth stated that these challenges included issues around the financing of the Dedicated Schools Grant and the High Needs Block as well as around the cost of placements for Looked After Children. Councillor Cusworth advised that despite these challenges and the pressures that they placed on the budget, that she was pleased to announce several new proposed investments for 2022/23. These investments included an increase in Family Group Conferencing and extra funding for Universal Youth Work that Councillor Cusworth noted would have a positive impact on children and their families across the Borough. Councillor Cusworth also noted that the proposed budget would continue to provide support to families in receipt of free school meals with the cost of school uniforms when a child transitioned to a new school. Councillor Cusworth also noted that the proposed budget contained funding for additional Social Work provision that would enable an increase in the amount of support that could be provided for children and young people at risk of criminal exploitation.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester noted that whilst he was supportive of the budget in principle, and that having discussed the proposals with the Local Government Association he was confident that the Council was financially well managed, he did have some reservations about the proposed budget. These reservations included the regressive nature of the charges for brown bins, how the road maintenance budget was managed and how, in his view, that there were activities that were funded

from the Housing Revenue Account that should be funded from the General Fund. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester concluded his comments in welcoming the proposed increase in wages for Social Care staff. Councillor Atkin commended the proposed budget in being one of the very best that he had seen in all of his time as a Councillor and welcomed the extra funding for Planning Enforcement and updating the Borough's CCTV network. Councillor Baker-Rodgers stated that the proposed budget would protect and invest in services, maintain financial reserves and support residents across the Borough.

Councillor Allen noted the extensive public consultation that had informed the development of the proposed budget and advised that whilst different opinions had been expressed around specific elements of the budget, that there had been overwhelming public support for the budget's overall themes and priorities. Councillor Allen expressed her support for the proposed investments in the Town Centre that would bring the new community that was developing in the Town Centre together by delivering on their needs and priorities.

In response to the issues raised in the debate the Leader thanked Members for their comments in support of the Budget. In response to Councillor Bennett-Sylvester, the Leader thanked him for his comments regarding the good financial management of the Council and for taking the time to discuss this with the Local Government Association. The Leader advised in response to Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's concerns regarding the management and delivery of the Roads Improvement Programme, that whilst there would always be room for improvement in this area, he was confident that the Road Improvement Programme was being delivered in a way that delivered the best value possible for local residents. The Leader welcomed Councillor Atkin's comments regarding Planning Enforcement and CCTV, noting that these would have a positive impact on residents across the Borough. In conclusion the Leader advised that the proposed budget delivered on the priorities of residents in a way that was also financially sustainable. The Leader also advised that the proposed budget would begin to roll back on some of the cuts to services that had been required since 2010 in the Council's response to austerity by increasing investment in the services that had been impacted most by the cuts. The Leader concluded his remarks in commending the proposed budget to members.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, and the Council's Constitution, a recorded vote was taken for this item as follows:

**For:** Councillors Alam, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Aveyard, Baker-Rodgers, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, Clark, Cooksey, Cowen, Cusworth, Elliott, Griffin, Haleem, Havard, Hoddinott, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Monk, Read, Roche, Sheppard, Taylor, Wyatt and Yasseen.

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**Against:** Councillors Bacon, Ball, Barker, Barley, Baum-Dixon, Burnett, A. Carter, C. Carter, Castledine-Dack, T. Collingham, Z. Collingham, Fisher, Hunter, Mills, Reynolds, Tarmey, Thompson, Tinsley and Wooding.

**Abstentions:** None

**Resolved: -**

1. That the Budget and Financial Strategy for 2022/23, as set out in the report and appendices, including the proposed budget adjustments and investments, a basic Council Tax increase of 1.5% and an Adult Social Care precept of 3%, be approved.
2. That the proposed Local Council Tax Support Top Up scheme, that will provide additional support to low-income households who are most vulnerable to rising household costs and detailed in section 2.5.11-15 of the officer's report, be approved.
3. That the updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy up to 2025/26, be approved.
4. That the Reserves Strategy, as detailed at Section 2.8 of the submitted report, be approved noting that the final determination of Reserves will be approved as part of reporting process for the financial outturn for 2021/22.
5. That the comments and advice of the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer), provided in compliance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, as to the robustness of the estimates included in the Budget and the adequacy of reserves for which the Budget provides, as detailed at Section 2.12 of the submitted report), be noted and accepted.
6. That the feedback from the public and partners, following the public consultation on the Council's budget for 2022/23 that took place from 22nd December 2021 to 23rd January 2022 and attached as Appendix 9 of the submitted report, be noted.
7. That the proposed increases in Adult Social Care provider contracts and for Personal Assistants as set out at Section 2.4 of the submitted report, be approved.
8. That the revenue investment proposals, as set out at Section 2.7 and at Appendix 2 of the submitted report, be approved.
9. That the Council Fees and Charges schedules for 2022/23, as detailed at Appendix 7 of the submitted report, be approved.



10. That the application of the Business Rates Reliefs, in line with Government guidance and set out at Section 2.9 of the submitted report, be approved.
11. That the proposed Capital Strategy and Capital Programme, as detailed at Section 2.10 and at Appendices 3A to 3F of the submitted report, be approved.
12. That the Treasury Management matters for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 4 of the submitted report, including the Prudential Indicators, the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Investment Strategy, be approved.
13. That the Flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2022/23, as detailed at Appendix 5 of the submitted report, be approved.
14. That the transfer of any 2021/22 revenue outturn underspend into the Council's reserves, be held within the Budget and Financial Strategy Reserve.
15. That any remaining Covid funding balances be transferred into the Council's reserves to meet Covid related pressures and costs in 2022/23.
16. That the Capital Programme Budget continues to be managed in line with the following key principles:
  - (i) Any underspends on the existing approved Capital Programme in respect of 2021/22 be rolled forward into future years, subject to an individual review of each carry forward to be set out within the Financial Outturn 2021/22 report to Cabinet.
  - (ii) In line with Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules 7.7 to 7.11 and 8.12, any successful grant applications in respect of capital projects will be added to the Council's approved Capital Programme on an ongoing basis.
  - (iii) Capitalisation opportunities and capital receipts flexibilities will be maximised, with capital receipts earmarked to minimise revenue costs.
17. That the Statutory Resolution of Council Tax for 2022/23, as set out at Appendix 6 of the submitted report, incorporating precept figures as advised from the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority and the Town and Parish Councils within the Borough, be approved.

Mover: Councillor Read

Seconder: Councillor Alam

**129. RECOMMENDATION FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE - PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022-23**

Further to Minute No. 11 of the Staffing Committee held on 16th February, 2022, consideration was given to a report that detailed the proposed the Pay Policy Statement for 2022-23.

It was noted that the Localism Act 2011, Chapter 8 Pay Accountability, made it a legal requirement for authorities to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement by 31st March each year and that this must be agreed by Council and detail the remuneration of its Chief Officers.

The Pay Policy Statement for 2022-23 was attached as an appendix to the report submitted.

Resolved: - That the Pay Policy Statement for 2022-23 be approved.

Mover: - Councillor Alam

Second: - Councillor Allen

**130. CALENDAR OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE 2022-23 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Consideration was given to a report, submitted in accordance with the rules of procedure as detailed in the Council's Constitution, that set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

Resolved: - That the Calendar of Meetings for the 2022/23 Municipal Year be approved.

Mover: - Councillor Read

Second: - Councillor Allen

**131. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY UPDATE (IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION UPDATE)**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board invited the Chair of the Improving Places to provide a report that updated Council on scrutiny activity.

Councillor Wyatt, Chair of the Improving Places Select Commission, provided an overview on the recent scrutiny work which included a broad work programme for 2021-22, based on the Council Plan 2017-2020 and the Year Ahead Plan 2020-21. Non-executive Members had evaluated several plans and strategies within the remit of this Commission, as well as monitored the impact of services on customer outcomes and experience.

Reference was made to:-

- Progress monitoring of strategies and plans following past scrutiny.
- Recommendations made by the committees.
- Outcomes resulting from scrutiny.
- Reviews - underway or due to commence.
- Sub-group/Task and Finish Group activity.
- Member visits.
- Public involvement in scrutiny.
- Key future items.
- Other activity undertaken by the Scrutiny Members.

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

Mover: Councillor Clark

Seconder: Councillor Barley

**132. FREEMAN OF THE BOROUGH NOMINATION UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 104 of the meeting of the Council held on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2022, consideration was given to the report where Council had agreed that Mr. Gavin Walker MBE would be granted the title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough at Annual Council, in accordance with its powers under the provisions of Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Due to his training schedule Mr. Walker MBE was unable to attend a meeting on that date, therefore the Council was being asked to note that an extraordinary meeting of the Council would be arranged for a suitable date and time after 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2022.

Resolved:- That the request for an extraordinary meeting of the Council arranged for a suitable date and time after 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 to bestow the title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough to Mr. Gavin Walker MBE be noted.

Mover:- Councillor Atkin

Seconder:- Councillor Taylor

**133. AMENDMENTS TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

Further to Minute No. 15 to the annual meeting of Council held on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2021, consideration was given to the report which sought approval from Council of amendments to the nomination of Members to serve on Committees, Boards and Panels.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board placed on record her thanks and appreciation to Councillor Barley as Vice-Chair who was stepping down from the position in readiness for the arrival of her new baby.

Resolved:- That the amendments to the nominations of Members to serve on the Committees, Boards and Panels as listed in the Mayor's Letter as follows be approved:-

**Audit Committee**

- Cllr Hoddinott to be removed
- Cllr Cowen to be added as Vice Chair

**Corporate Parenting Board**

- Cllr Hughes to be added

**Health and Wellbeing Board**

- Cllr Aveyard to be added

**Health Select Commission**

- Cllr Baker-Rogers to be removed
- Cllr Whomersley to be removed
- Cllr Hoddinott to be added

**Improving Places Select Commission**

- Cllr Taylor to be added
- Cllr Pitchley to be removed

**Overview and Scrutiny Management Board**

- Cllr Hoddinott to be removed
- Cllr Barley to be removed
- Cllr Cowen to be added
- Cllr Thomas Collingham to be added as Vice Chair

**Planning Board**

- Cllr Sheppard to be added as a substitute

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Allen

**134. NOTICE OF MOTION - LIFESAVING EQUIPMENT**

It was moved by Councillor Sheppard and seconded by Councillor Taylor that:-

Last year, two young men tragically lost their lives after getting into difficulty in the water at Ulley Reservoir.

As with all our open water sites, lifesaving equipment is in place but in line with national practice, this equipment is kept behind a keypad lock for security, which requires a telephone call to obtain the code to release the lock.

In any emergency, time is critical and every second of delay worsens the chances of a positive outcome.



**138. LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE**

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

Mover:- Councillor Baker-Rodgers                      Second:- Councillor McNeely

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

There were none.

**140. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSONS**

**(1) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester** asked could the Leader please report on progress on provision of a call back service for telephone enquiries from residents to save on their experiencing extended call wait times?

The Leader confirmed the testing identified some areas for development and additional improvements which have since been incorporated into the final design of the new 'callback' feature. Robust testing had been undertaken to ensure both customers and staff received a positive experience.

The 'callback' facility went 'live' on 1<sup>st</sup> March in a limited way so it could be tested and learnt from. It was initially being offered for customers experiencing long wait times who have called 01709 336009 ('Housing Services' and 'Housing Repairs'), which were managed by the corporate contact centre. This was very much a pilot phase and these services were chosen as historic data showed a greater likelihood of a long call wait time for enquiries of this nature.

This would be reviewed in terms of how successful the pilot was and then making decisions regarding a wider roll out to further services managed by the corporate contact centre such as Streetpride and Waste Management.

In a supplementary question Councillor Bennett-Sylvester welcomed the progress to date and gave examples of long waiting times (one of one hour and 27 minutes), which was unacceptable especially for callers who had no internet access. He asked if there was a scheduled timeframe for review of data collected on waiting times.

The Leader confirmed that a report would be prepared in the next few months for officers to review over a suitable time period.

**(2) Councillor T. Collingham** referred to Council resources for Dog Warden being severely small in comparison to other environment areas, however, the amount of dog fouling concerns from residents continued to rise. He asked what were the Council doing to address this growing problem?

Councillor Beck explained the Council operated a number of services in relation to dogs and animals which included nuisance and welfare related issues, the collection of stray dogs and dealing with dog fouling.

Councillor Beck gave his assurance that it was not only the Dog Warden Service who were empowered to enforce against irresponsible dog owners. Under a Public Spaces Protection Order the majority of the Council's Community Protection and Environmental Health Officers were empowered to issue fines in relation to dog fouling and in addition, through the Council's partnership with Doncaster Council, Local Authority Support were also empowered to serve these types of fixed penalties.

The Council routinely directed these officers to areas where reports of dog fouling were received.

Enforcing dog fouling, however, remained a significant challenge and this was reflected in the low numbers of fines that were issued, not just in Rotherham but nationally. This was primarily because of the fact that when dog walkers were in sight of other people, be they Enforcement Officers or not, they would generally pick up their dog's mess. The Council continued to target those that did not pick up after their dog and would encourage people to report any areas of concerns, as the Council regularly proactively patrolled hot spot areas.

There had been 470 reports dealt with.

In a supplementary question Councillor T. Collingham asked what was the Service doing to clean up the mess and ensure the Borough had cleaner streets.

Councillor Beck confirmed Members had a role in reporting problem areas and the Service would ensure problems were tackled. If there were any specific areas of concern the Service could be directed to specifically address them.

**(3) Councillor Barley** asked could the Cabinet Member please tell her what support an adult fleeing domestic abuse should expect to receive in the immediate aftermath of leaving an abusive situation, including the specific services offered by RMBC and how this linked in with the support available from partner organisations?

Councillor Alam firstly confirmed the Council and its partners believed victims should have the right to stay in their own home and feel protected through robust action against perpetrators of abuse. Clearly that was not

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always possible and when a victim did need to flee, the Council offered a range of support services for victims of domestic abuse.

The Council commissioned a bespoke refuge for domestic abuse victims, which included support for the whole family and was currently provided by Rotherham Rise.

The Council also provided a number of stand-alone properties to ensure there was an offer available to meet different needs and circumstances. Again, wrap-around support was in place for the whole family where this was required.

Aside from the provision of accommodation, the Council had an in-house support service which worked with high-risk victims of domestic abuse, alongside an outreach support service delivered by Rotherham Rise who dealt with lower levels of risk. The Council had also been able to introduce specific therapeutic support for victims alongside safety planning, which included the installation of equipment such as alarms and window locks.

The Council were committed to tackling Domestic Abuse and agreed to increase the funding available to support victims last year by £150,000, and the Cabinet Member was pleased the Government had also increased funding following the Domestic Abuse Act, with £619,000 available for the coming financial year, which had further helped to increase staff capacity.

Councillor Alam confirmed to Councillor Barley that should she have any concerns about these services he would be happy to discuss them further.

In a supplementary question Councillor Barley was aware some victims had to fight for support and had receiving conflicting messages. On this basis she would like to take up the offer to discuss this further with Councillor Alam.

Councillor Alam welcomed the opportunity.

**(4) Councillor Taylor** asked could the Cabinet Member confirm the arrangements to deal with reports of contractor paraphernalia, signs, barriers etc. left behind following utility/highway works.

Councillor Beck explained this was activity the Council was good at with the Council approving and co-ordinating all works that were carried out on the Highway by Statutory Undertakers, for example Yorkshire Water, Northern Gas Networks, or their contractors through the Council's Streetwork Permitting system and oversaw the Council's own internal delivery teams in the same way.



The Highway Inspector for each area monitored any Streetwork Permits that were in place in their area and noted when works were nearing the suggested completion date. The Highway Inspector would then visit the site on or around the suggested completion date, to determine if the works have finished and to check if any signs, barriers, or incomplete works remained from the planned works.

If any items remained, the Statutory Undertakers were informed and a charge levied on the Contractor for every day that the site was not cleared. The charge would continue to be made until all signs and barriers were removed from site. The Highway Inspector would check the site every day until items were cleared.

If the signs were deemed a hazard, the Highway Inspector could require that the items were removed within 2 hours and would contact the utility company immediately to ensure this took place.

The Council had issued 45 Notice charges under Section 74 of the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 to external Contractors from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 which totalled fines of £25,000.

In a supplementary question Councillor Taylor provided an example on the A57 where signs and barriers were being used as missiles by vandals. He asked would the Cabinet Member be prepared to meet with him and see where lessons could be learnt.

Councillor Beck confirmed he was happy to meet with Councillor Taylor.

**(5) Councillor T. Collingham** had recently stumbled upon the GetRidReyt webpage on the RMBC website. This was aiming to tackle flytipping by displaying images of culprits and requesting people to name and shame. He asked how were the Council promoting this and where were they receiving the CCTV images from?

Councillor Beck explained the GetRidReyt campaign was a Council initiative to support the approach to tackling fly tipping across the Borough. It started in March 2021 and was currently being refreshed. The images used were captured from the range of CCTV tools that the Council had available, including both the fixed system, with around 100 cameras and Ward-based re-deployable overt and covert cameras numbering around 120.

The campaign aimed to highlight the action being taken by the Council, inform the public about what they needed to do to manage their waste as well as deterring potential offenders. It was focused on identifying offenders that officers had been unable to trace following their enquiries and supported the Council's commitment to take robust action against fly tippers.

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The Council have been promoting this primarily on social media and through its website with one of the videos attracting over 14,000 views, and it had also had some local press coverage. The hashtag had also been used across a range of other promotions and messages, including community litter-picking activity, the issuing of fixed penalty notices and court results.

In a supplementary question Councillor T. Collingham asked how many prosecutions had been issued in the last year.

Councillor Beck confirmed the Service was keen to improve on this area, but would respond with an answer in writing.

**(6) Councillor Tinsley** asked with events for the launch event of Rotherham as the Children's capital of culture 2025 having commenced, would RMBC be looking to involve our twinned town Saint-Quentin in future events?

Councillor Sheppard responded and confirmed that in 2025, Rotherham would become the world's first Children's Capital of Culture.

The Children's Capital of Culture programme would provide activities, opportunities, skills, training, and development for children and young people in Rotherham aged 0-25.

The Children's Capital of Culture programme would always have Rotherham at its heart, whilst also having a regional, national, and international reach.

As the programme developed, this would include giving children and young people from Rotherham access to a rich and diverse range of opportunities through developing relationships and collaborations with other towns and cities, and if children wished for this to include St Quentin then that was something the Council would look to explore.

**(7) Councillor T. Collingham** asked how many retrospective planning applications were submitted to the Council in the previous 2 years and what percentage of these were accepted?

Councillor Atkin explained "retrospective" planning applications were not recorded as a distinct category, as all applications followed the same process. However, a planning application may be received after a complaint about a development had been made and in the last 2 years 137 applications had been submitted following an enforcement investigation. 68% of these were subsequently granted planning permission.

Councillor Collingham asked if this detail could be forwarded to him in an email and Councillor Atkin confirmed he would forward on.

**(8) Councillor Baum-Dixon** explained as a result of the recent storms, several houses in Anston had been damaged quite severely by trees on RMBC land falling into their properties. In every case, RMBC officers had been told by residents these trees were dangerous. He asked would the Council now finally listen to residents and adopt a more proactive approach to tree management in the Borough?

Councillor Sheppard explained the Tree Service had been made aware of 2 cases of fallen trees in the Anston area, which occurred during recent storms. In one case a tree fell onto a property damaging a garage and roof tiles at a property in the Anston area and the other a tree fell between 2 properties in the Parklands Avenue area. Both incidents have been attended to as part of the response to storm damage across the Borough over the last few weeks.

The Council appreciated that this was a particularly distressing time for the residents involved and unsettling for neighbouring residents and, therefore, the Council's Tree Service and Countryside Management Service had been in communication with residents to reassure them of the safe management of the trees that neighbour properties in this area.

A full tree survey and inspection of trees in the area was undertaken in 2017 and works undertaken to remove any trees that were found to be failing in health alongside pruning works to ensure good management of the tree stock. In addition to the full survey, individual inspections had been undertaken where service requests had arisen throughout the intervening period. Trees close to those that failed had been visually inspected this week at the request of residents and showed no signs of weakness. The woodland areas were due for a further full arboricultural inspection later in 2022, however, the Service had brought this full inspection by an independent tree consultant forward to further reassure residents

Whilst the trees were found to be in good health with low risk of collapse, all trees, regardless of their age and size, had potential to fall, depending on the wind load and direction. Over the last 10 days the north of the country had seen unprecedented weather conditions with 3 separate storms causing issues from tree damage, localised flooding and property damage across the Borough and the county.

It was Council policy for tree surveys in woodlands (where they bordered urban areas) to be undertaken every 5 years and as such inspection was not due until later this year. However, given the recent issues experienced at this location the Council would bring forward a full woodland inspection within the coming weeks.

In a supplementary question Councillor Baum-Dixon asked with the distress caused by the trees falling if the tree survey to be undertaken could be more inclusive and include consultation with local residents.

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Councillor Sheppard confirmed the survey details would be shared with local residents.

**(9) Councillor Burnett's** question to be responded to in writing.

**(10) Councillor T. Collingham's** question was withdrawn.

**(11) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester** asked could the Cabinet Member please advise on the number of active Rothercard users over the past 12 months?

Councillor Sheppard confirmed that in the 12 months period from 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 to 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2022, a total of 2,132 Rothercard applications were received.

Rothercards lasted up to 5 years and so a number of older cards would also be in use.

There was no current accurate figures of the total number of active Rothercard users over the past 12 months. There was a review of Rothercard underway which would look at the whole scheme.

In a supplementary question Councillor Bennett-Sylvester referred to the open forum arrangement of the Working Group and asked about the timeframe for progressing Working Group outcomes back to Council.

Councillor Sheppard confirmed the Working Group was still in its infancy and the contributions positive and aspirational. The outcomes would initially be shared with Scrutiny with a view to having a Rothercard Scheme that was fit for purpose.

**(12) Councillor Whomersley's** question would be responded to in writing.

**(13) Councillor T. Collingham** asked what measures were the Council taking to promote the new Highway code in Rotherham including new cyclist priorities and pedestrian priorities on crossings.

Councillor Beck explained the Council was part of the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership. This organisation promoted Road safety Education, Training and Publicity (ETP) activity on the Council's behalf. The Partnership included the 4 local authorities, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, South Yorkshire Police and the SYSRP central team based at the Lifewise Centre in Hellaby.

The Council had also used its roadside variable message signs to display reminders to drivers, signposting them to the .GOV website for further information.

In a supplementary question Councillor T. Collingham asked if the Council could make better use of social media.

Councillor Beck confirmed social media was already being used on platforms like Facebook, Twitter etc.

**(14) Councillor Tinsley** referred to CCTV cameras being currently monitored by South Yorkshire Police in a control room over in Doncaster, where over 300 cameras were expected to be monitored. With a rise in anti-social behaviour and crime in places like Maltby, would the Council bring CCTV camera monitoring back in-house and under a manageable amount.

Councillor Alam confirmed the control room in Doncaster monitored around 100 cameras from within the Rotherham area. However, there were a number of additional cameras, such as re-deployable cameras, that were monitored locally by Council staff and Police partners.

The staff in the Doncaster monitoring suite represented South Yorkshire Police's commitment to CCTV as they paid for the staff within the suite who monitored the feeds and then liaised in real-time with officers on the ground, directing resources as required. This full control room capability could not be replicated in Rotherham alone without significant additional revenue and capital costs being incurred, and the Council would not want to see the overall level of CCTV coverage reduced.

The Council was investing in the CCTV system with a £420,000 improvement project now underway, including the additional £250,000 of capital and £60,000 of revenue budget proposed at today's Council meeting. This investment would deliver a modernised system and increase the coverage and quality of CCTV images, alongside delivering wider capabilities. The Council would also retain its existing ability to monitor and direct cameras in live time through the Control Room which already existed in Rotherham, which could be used during any major incident or significant event.

Finally, the transformation work currently underway as a result of the investment would significantly improve access to CCTV images for local Council Officers. It would also link the current re-deployable CCTV to the Council's main CCTV system, improving access and delivering efficiencies.

In a supplementary question Councillor Tinsley referred to the overall monitoring across South Yorkshire and the conflict of displays for areas such as Maltby when the cameras were not monitored live. When queries were made about incidents information was not always forthcoming and asked if this could be kept under review.

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Councillor Alam was aware of the concerns of local Elected Members in this area in terms of anti-social behaviour and crime. He was also aware that a robust partnership action plan was in place which was being jointly delivered by the Council, the Police and other partners. He had asked officers to ensure that they engaged continuously with local Elected Members to keep them informed and respond to any community concerns.

**(15) Councillor Hoddinott** asked could the Cabinet Member update her on the progress of Rotherham's Levelling Up bids?

Councillor Lelliott advised the Council were successful in 2 out of 3 bids that were made to the Levelling Up Fund bringing in a total of almost £40million. (Nationally only a third of bids were successful)

The Town Centre bid would align with our other key investments to transform the Town Centre into a vibrant place to live and spend time. The first tranche of the £19.5million grant had been received, and the Council was progressing on the projects it would fund in the Town Centre which included improvements to connect the major developments taking place in the town over the next few years such as:-

- A new bridge across the River Don linking the new Riverside residential quarter to Don Street.
- A new 'river walk' connecting Riverside Residential Quarter site on Westgate across Main Street and to Bridge Street.

For the Leisure Economy and Skills bid this would deliver improvements to major attractions and support new skills projects. Again, the first tranche of the £19,990,000 grant funding has now arrived and will deliver:-

- Restoration of the stable block at Wentworth Woodhouse as part of the wider masterplan.
- Restoration of the grammar school building at Maltby Academy.

These projects would make a significant and lasting impact on the leisure and culture offer in Rotherham along with developing the skills base that would support the sector to grow.

In a supplementary question Councillor Hoddinott expressed her disappointment for bids for Dinnington and Wath missing out and asked if the Council would try harder for these areas in the next round of funding.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the Council were very committed to securing funding and were already preparing bids for the next round of funding.

**(16) Councillor T. Collingham** referred to pest problems being rife across estates and shopping areas in Thurcroft and asked what were the Council doing to tackle the issues?

Councillor Beck confirmed officers had reviewed the number of pest control jobs in Thurcroft and there were currently only 3 active Service requests for the Council's Pest Control Service in that area, all of which related to domestic properties. He asked if Councillor Collingham was aware of wider problems then he was urged to report those to the service.

**(17) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester** asked could the Cabinet Member please report on the Children's Capital of Culture launch and activities during last week's half term holiday?

Councillor Sheppard confirmed the Children's Capital of Culture launch festival was a 10 day festival of activities that commenced on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February. The festival included:-

- The inaugural Rotherham Skate and Arts Festival, a 3 day event in the Town Centre featuring a pop-up skate park, free creative workshops, live bands and DJs, and street food.
- An art installation, Robot Selfie, was sited in the outdoor covered market, where it created an 8 x 10 metre mural featuring local children and young people.
- A temporary exhibition at Clifton Park Museum, which would run from 21<sup>st</sup> February – 29<sup>th</sup> May, that told the story of Children's Capital of Culture and shares memories of youth and childhood in Rotherham.
- Two performances at Rotherham Civic Theatre of Truth to Power Café, an acclaimed, internationally-touring theatre performance. The Rotherham edition of the show featured local young people aged 14-to-25 performing and was livestreamed to a global audience.
- Grimm & Co's delivery of a 5 day story festival for children, young people, and families at their new pop-up premises in the Old Town Hall site.
- The commissioning of a new neon art installation, created by writer Ian McMillan and artist Patrick Murphy in collaboration with local young people.

The launch festival was planned and delivered in collaboration with a cohort of Trainee Young Producers: local 16-to-25 year olds who have been employed part-time to help deliver the Children's Capital of Culture project. The Trainee Young Producers posts were funded through the UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF) and Arts Council England (ACE).

The Festival launched the journey towards Rotherham becoming the world's first Children's Capital of Culture in 2025.

Early indications in relation to engagements have been positive with:-

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- Over 1,000 people attending the 3 day Skate and Art Festival, the spray/stencil workshops were fully booked and the skate area and pro-demos proved very popular, despite some challenging weather conditions.
- 220 people attended the For Truth to Power Café over the course of the 2 performances. 7 Rotherham young people performed as part of the show. Another 50 Rotherham young people had their work published in a Truth to Power Cafe publication which was issued to accompany the show.
- 1,233 visitors attended the Museum during last week's half-term following the opening of the temporary exhibition.

In a supplementary question Councillor Bennett-Sylvester welcomed the wide ranging activity but asked about accessibility and inclusivity of activities with some of the paid services.

Councillor Sheppard pointed out only the Civic Theatre had a paid event but was proud to see the joy that was brought to the children across the Borough and how the celebrations were thoroughly enjoyed.

**(18) Councillor T. Collingham's** question was withdrawn.

**(19) Councillor Tinsley** referred to before the elections last year how Maltby, along with a few other Wards, was unable to host by-elections due to Covid legislation. Due to the Ward being unrepresented he asked could the Councillor allowance that was not allocated be released to make improvements locally.

Councillor Allen explained the Community Leadership Fund was allocated to individual Elected Members and not the Ward. On this basis, there was no provision to re-allocate an individual Member's budget to the Ward when there was a Councillor vacancy.

In a supplementary question Councillor Tinsley believed that if the funds could be reallocated it could be used to support projects such as Coronation Park and asked if the decision could be reconsidered.

Councillor Allen confirmed this could not be reconsidered but would ask that the Cabinet Member with responsibility to contact Councillor Tinsley to see what could be done.

**(20) Councillor T. Collingham** was pleased to hear of the recent approval of projects for the Towns and Villages Fund but asked when could places such as his own ward in Thurcroft and Wickersley South expect to hear of the progression to the next stage in the second phase.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the first phase of the Towns and Villages Fund was approved by Cabinet in January 2022, and design, consultation and delivery was underway in these 6 schemes. The Cabinet report recommended that the second phase of the programme be approved by



Cabinet in Summer 2022, and Officers would be undertaking due diligence on all of the second phase projects before this time.

Members would be kept up to date through the current Neighbourhood Working structures such as Ward briefings. Projects would be undertaken on a rolling basis, so when the first schemes have been delivered, further capacity would be allocated to Phase 2 projects.

**(21) Councillor Whomersley's** question would be responded to in writing.

**141. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items for consideration.