

COUNCIL MEETING
12th January, 2022

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

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

91. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor issued her congratulations to:-

Councillors Singleton and Collingham on their recent wedding wishing them well on their lives together.

Those who were recognised in the New Year Honours list for their achievements and service across the country, but in particular the following:-

- Kim Phillips awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for public services, following her exemplary efforts to support communities around Rotherham. Working for RMBC, Kim's contribution to the Council had been invaluable. As well as helping to shape the Council's approach to catering and facilities management, and representing her peers at a national level, Kim had been instrumental in helping RMBC to support the Covid response and in championing our work with children and young people.
- Gavin Walker from Wickersley awarded an MBE in recognition of his outstanding services to sports and for inspiring others facing adversity through life-changing events. He co-captained the GB wheelchair rugby squad, who won gold in the Tokyo Olympics last year.
- Barry Horne, Chief Executive of Activity Alliance, awarded an MBE for services to inclusivity in sport. He helped to transform the organisation into a national charity and was a leading voice for disabled people in sport and activity, changing attitudes and embedding inclusive practices across the country.
- Ken Dunn, Chair of Africa's Gift Ltd., awarded an MBE for his services to development and local communities in Lesotho and sub-Saharan Africa

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The Mayor also welcomed the opportunity to report on a number of engagements:-

- Performances at the Civic Theatre, the Annual Dinner and Presentation at the Phoenix Golf Club Pavilion and the Rotherham Chamber Celebration Event held at Magna.
- Participation in the Rotherham College graduation ceremony at New York Stadium.
- Crossroads Care Annual General meeting at Sitwell Park Golf Club – Crossroads are an outstanding organisation who provide care for vulnerable people across Rotherham.
- Visits to the Rotherham Cancer Care Christmas Fare at St Cuthbert's Church, Rotherham Interfaith Tea Party at the Unity Centre and welcome the Master and Mistress Cutler briefly to the Town Hall.

During November:-

- The opening of the Social Supermarket on Corporation Street.
- Awareness raising for Prostate and Lung Cancer with the Voluntary Action Rotherham's Health Engagement Team.
- The Queen's Award for Enterprise, at which the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire presented the award for International Trade for Outstanding Short-Term Growth in overseas sales to SJM Alloys and Metals Limited
- Commemorated Armistice Day by paying respects to those in the armed forces, both past and present, at events in All Saints Square and Clifton Park, visited the beautiful Poppy Cascade at the Rotherham indoor market and sold poppies at a local supermarket.
- Switched the Christmas lights on.

During December:-

- Santa's Christmas Reindeer event at the Dinnington Resource Centre.
- Start-a-Heart Christmas Market at Woodlathes Village.
- A Gothic Christmas Ball and dinner at Swinton Masonic Hall.
- The Maltby Miners Welfare band Christmas concert in the Civic Theatre – the performance was absolutely fantastic.

Other engagements included:-

- The official launch of the New Life Enterprise at Whiston Parish Hall. This organisation supports individuals with learning disabilities, specifically from BAME communities, enabling members to live fulfilling and active lives within the community.
- The occasion of the Freedom of the Borough ceremony which took place on the 14th December in honour of Dame Julie Kenny receiving her award of Freewoman of the Borough. Dame Julie was the first woman in Rotherham in 50 years to receive this honour and it was a delight to be part of the celebration to recognise her achievements and the location in which it took place was stunning.
- Engagements were undertaken whilst wearing the official Council Christmas face masks to keep us and everyone attending safe.

92. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Barker, Burnett, Cowen, Hague, Wilson.

93. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none to report.

94. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Resolved: - That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 10th November, 2021, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover: - Councillor Read

Seconder: - Councillor Allen

95. PETITIONS

There were no Petitions to report.

96. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Atkin and Cusworth, declared a personal interest in agenda item 12 (Housing Rents and Services Charges 2022/23) as they had family members who held a Council tenancy.

Councillors Andrews, Bennett-Sylvester, Lelliott, McNeely and Wyatt declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 (Housing Rents and Services Charges 2022/23) as they held a Council tenancy.

Councillors A. Carter and Miro declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (Notice of Motion – Health and Social Care) on the grounds of having a medical background.

97. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(1) Miss V.M. asked why had the Stayput Handyman Service which provided vital support to elderly and vulnerable residents of the Borough been stopped without prior notification to residents?

Councillor Roche referred to the Stayput Handyperson Service which was provided by Yorkshire Housing until 30th September 2021.

A review of the service was carried out in 2020/21 which showed that activity had significantly reduced since the service was commissioned in 2016/17. A customer engagement exercise was undertaken with past and present customers who had been in receipt of the service within the previous 12 months. Postal and telephone surveys were provided to these customers and on-line surveys were also made available on social media - to ensure members of the public were aware of the consultation exercise.

The outcome of the engagement exercise revealed that the service was providing some duplicated activity that Council services were already providing and that a high number of customers confirmed that if the service was no longer free of charge - they would be willing to financially contribute to this type of service in the future.

Recommendations from the review concluded that customers would be signposted to the Adult Social Care Customer Contact teams and Housing Contact Centre with a view to ongoing support or support to self-fund this type of provision in the future by 1st October 2021. The contract was subsequently terminated on 30th September, 2021.

There were services that people could access such as Yorkshire Housing's Handytec Service, First Contact, Community Occupational Therapy Service, Housing Contact Centre and voluntary and community sector services.

In a supplementary question Miss V.M. pointed out that the demand for the service was high and residents were begging for the service to be reinstated as it provided a valuable support for vulnerable people.

Councillor Roche suggested the member of the public contact him and he would investigate her concerns, but it was unlikely the service would be recommissioned.

(2) Mr. B.C. asked what, following on from the last Council Meeting, were the rules, constraints, guidelines on the sound volume at Council Meetings to accommodate the general public.

The Deputy Leader confirmed there were no specific rules, constraints, and guidelines on sound levels at Council meetings. The Council always tried to ensure that its meetings were accessible to all members of the community.

The impacts of the pandemic and the efforts the Council had gone to in ensuring that meetings were safe for the public, Councillors, and officers have sometimes meant that the ability to make adjustments had been constrained. This had especially been the case as the Government had chosen not to put in place the legislation necessary to enable remote meetings to continue as they did during the first part of the pandemic.

The Council would continue to listen to any feedback that it received that would enable it to improve the accessibility of meetings.

In his supplementary question Mr. B.C. referred to disturbances and distractions at the last Council Meeting which made listening to discussion and debate difficult when members of the public were sat at the back of the room.

Councillor Allen accepted what the member of the public reported and future mitigation would be of benefit to the public.

(3) E. was not present so would receive an answer to her question in writing.

98. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters requiring exclusion of the press or public.

99. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader presented his statement and wished to start by congratulating Councillors Singleton and Collingham on their recent wedding and on behalf of the Council wishing them all the best for their lives together.

The Leader shared the Mayor's congratulations and good news celebrating the honour bestowed in the Queen's Birthday Honours List to the Council's, Head of Catering and Facilities Services, Kim Phillips.

Kim received an MBE for her work supporting communities within the Borough including during the pandemic. This award was a testament to the hard work and dedication that Kim has shown over the past 2 years and thoroughly deserved.

A warm welcome was also issued to the newest members to the Council following the recent by-elections; Councillor Drew Tarmey representing Anston and Woodsetts and Councillor Robert Taylor representing the people of Aughton and Swallownest.

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Still of concern was the Government's unwillingness to legislate for remote and virtual meetings and the 7 month timeframe thinking about whether to allow it to continue.

Whatever the pros and cons of meeting online, at the present time when people were being asked to work from home it did not appear right that Councillors and the staff who provided support were forced to meet in a room like this.

Business could be conducted more safely and especially when Covid infections in the Borough were higher than they had ever been, the Council should be reasonably allowed to do all it could and ensure no-one's health was put at risk.

It was hoped the Government would rethink its policy, but until then the Leader hoped everyone remained safe and well until they did.

A period of not more than 10 minutes was allowed for questions.

Councillor Sansome sought guidance on whether an application had been made to the Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme which would fund 25 areas and provide innovative practical actions given the flooding issues the Borough had suffered in Kilnhurst.

The Leader was unable to confirm so would investigate further.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester welcomed the opening of Rotherham's first social supermarket, but in doing so asked whether Members in Rotherham, unlike some in Sheffield, would be advised not cross a picket line should strike action be implemented following the ballot for the pay offer.

The Leader did not have details about incidents in Sheffield, but believed Members from his political party would not endeavour to cross any picket line.

Councillor A. Carter echoed the sentiments by the Mayor and the Leader about the recent wedding between Councillors Singleton and Collingham and the recipients in the Queen's New Year's Honours, but asked what format representations had been made to the Government about the continuance of remote meetings since the legislative removal in May, 2021.

The Leader outlined the representations made to Government by the LGA and the Association of Democratic Services Officers. The Government had opened a period of consultation which the Council had contributed into. A Government view was expected soon, but with the increase in the number of infections reported in Rotherham the Council would have to wait for a response.

100. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 22nd November and 20th December, 2021 be received.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester made reference to Minute No. 70 (Proposals for the REACH Service) of the meeting of Cabinet held on 20th December, 2021. In doing so he asked that the further report detailing an options appraisal, with recommendations for Cabinet approval, fully consider the views of service users.

The Leader confirmed he was happy for this to be considered and be part of the process.

Councillor Ball also referred to Minute No. 76(2) of the same meeting and his question about the fatality on Cumwell Lane and asked if there was any update. He was aware of an online petition that had amassed a considerable number of signatures and asked that the mud on this road and the safety of users be seriously looked at.

Councillor Beck confirmed Councillor Ball's concerns were being looked into and would also be forwarded on after this meeting.

Mover: - Councillor Read

Seconder: - Councillor Allen

101. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - HRA BUSINESS PLAN 2022-23

Further to Minute No. 82 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th December, 2021, consideration was given to the report detailing the overview of the current position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the reason for any changes to the Business Plan.

The HRA recorded all expenditure and income relating to the provision of Council housing and related services, and the Council was required to produce a HRA Business Plan setting out its investment priorities over a 30 year period. It was reported that by the end of March 2022, 194 new Council homes would have been built since the start of the Housing Growth Programme.

A further £92.3m would be invested to deliver the Council's ambition to create 1,000 homes between 2018 and 2025-26. It was also reported that over the short to medium term forecast, the Business Plan was operating at or around the minimum balance. However, over the longer term, there was a significant squeeze on resources due to inflationary pressures even before the costs of achieving net zero carbon were factored in.

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Paragraph 2.2 of the report outlined the focus on the HRA Business Plan which included objectives such as supporting new affordable housing, supporting tenants to maximise income, tackling fuel poverty and achieving and maintaining the Decent Homes standards. Since the last update of the HRA Business Plan there had been significant policy changes, specifically relating to the Council's commitment to become net zero carbon by 2030. This created a significant financial challenge for the Plan.

The overall position remained challenging, particularly given the inflationary pressures evident in costs for delivery of the Housing Growth Programme and more generally the cost base of the HRA. As a consequence, it was deemed necessary to increase rents by 4.1%, in line with the Government's Rent Standard.

It was noted that the increase would not impact the most financially vulnerable tenants. The preferred option for the HRA Business Plan Base Case was outlined in the report as Option 1 and would result in the HRA having an operational surplus of £34m and provide support to the Housing Growth agenda and the Council's General Fund position.

Councillors A. Carter and Barley indicated their opposition to the HRA Business Plan. The Council could make its own choices and determine the rent increases accordingly.

A recorded vote was requested.

(Members in favour – Councillors Alam, Allen, The Mayor (Councillor Andrews), Atkin Aveyard, Baker-Rodgers, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, Clark, Cooksey, Cusworth, Elliott, Ellis, Griffin, Havard, Hoddinott, Hughes, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Monk, Pitchley, Read, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard, Taylor, Wyatt and Yasseen)

(Members against – Councillors Bacon, Ball, Barley, Baum-Dixon, A. Carter, C. Carter, Castledine-Dack, T. Collingham Z. Collingham, Fisher, Hunter, Mills, Miro, Reynolds, Tarmey, Thompson, Tinsley, Whormsley and Wooding)

Resolved:- (1) That the proposed 2022-23 Base Case Option 1 for the HRA Business Plan be approved.

(2) That the plan be reviewed annually to provide an updated financial position.

Mover:- Councillor Brookes

Seconder:- Councillor Allen

102. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES 2022-23

Further to Minute No. 83 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th December, 2021, consideration was given to the report which sought approval for the proposed values of the housing rents, non-dwelling rents, District Heating and service charges and the draft Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2022/23. The proposed charges were attached to the report at Appendix 1 and the proposed budget at Appendix 2.

The average rent in 2021/22 was £75.45 when aggregated over 52 weeks. The 2022/23 average weekly rent based on the Government policy of CPI (3.1% as at September 2021) plus 1% would be £78.54 totalling in an average increase of £3.09 per week. Rent increases in respect of shared ownership properties were subject to a different formula of RPI (4.9% as at September 2021) plus 0.5%. 51 shared ownership properties would be affected with rents increasing by £2.29 per week on average, from £42.41 to £44.70.

It was also proposed that there be a 2% increase in charges for garages and parking spaces, communal facilities, cooking gas and use of laundry facilities. This was in line with the Council's policy on fees and charges.

Due to the current energy crisis and subsequent rise in gas prices, it was proposed that the charging model for District Heating, which had been agreed by Full Council in December 2017, be revised to allow for a planned deficit should energy price increases exceed scheme income. This would allow the Council to shield the most financially vulnerable residents from significant increases.

The Cabinet Member for Housing explained how the increase in rents and charges was necessary to fund the Council's ongoing Housing Growth Programme and maintain properties to the Decent Homes Standard.

Councillors Barley and A. Carter did not feel the increase in rents were moderate given the cost of living crisis, believing that with control the Council could do more to support its vulnerable citizens.

Councillors Beck, Cusworth, Hoddinott and Read disagreed with those Members opposed to the rent increases and believed this measured approach was the best way forward and would still allow the Council to invest in its housing stock yet safeguard the least off tenants. They were in full support of the Council's aspirations and the investment in future housing.

A recorded vote was requested.

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(Members in favour – Councillors Alam, Allen, Atkin Aveyard, Baker-Rodgers, Beck, Bird, Brookes, Browne, Clark, Cooksey, Cusworth, Elliott, Ellis, Griffin, Havard, Hoddinott, Hughes, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Monk, Pitchley, Read, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard, Taylor and Yasseen)

(Members against – Councillors Bacon, Ball, Barley, Baum-Dixon, A. Carter, C. Carter, Castledine-Dack, T. Collingham Z. Collingham, Fisher, Hunter, Mills, Miro, Reynolds, Tarmey, Thompson, Tinsley, Whormsley and Wooding)

(Members abstaining - The Mayor (Councillor Andrews), Councillors Bennett-Sylvester, Lelliott, McNeely and Wyatt)

Resolved:- (1) That dwelling rents be increased by 4.1% in 2022/23 (Option 1) in line with the Government policy on rents for social housing which allows rents to increase by Consumer Price Index (CPI) (3.1% as at September 2021) plus 1%.

(2) That shared ownership rents be increased by 5.4% in 2022/23 (Option 1) in line with the Government policy on rents for social housing which allows rents to increase by Retail Price Index (RPI) (4.9% as at September 2021) plus 0.5%.

(3) That there be a 2% increase in charges for garages and parking spaces, communal facilities, cooking gas and use of laundry facilities, in line with the Council's policy on fees and charges.

(4) That the charging model for District Heating (as agreed by Full Council in December 2017) be revised to allow for a planned deficit should energy price increases exceed scheme income;

(5) That the unit charge per KWH and weekly prepayment charges for District Heating Schemes be increased by 15% in 2022/23 (Option 1) to limit the impact of anticipated market increases in the prices of energy and fuel costs.

(6) That the draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/23, attached at Appendix 2, be agreed.

Mover:- Councillor Brookes

Seconder:- Councillor Allen

103. COUNCIL PLAN 2022-2025 AND YEAR AHEAD DELIVERY PLAN

Further to Minute No. 85 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th December, 2021, consideration was given to the report which explained that a new Council Plan had been developed for 2022-25.

The Council had adopted the Year Ahead Plan in September 2020 as the Council Plan for operating within the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan had been extended in March 2021 and finished at the end of November 2021.

The Council Plan 2022-25 had been developed following a public consultation and was a key document outlining the Council's vision for the Borough and the priorities for serving residents and communities. The consultation had included online and postal surveys, focus groups and engagement at the Rotherham Show.

Appendix 3 detailed the key findings of the consultation. Engagement also took place with key stakeholders, Cabinet Members and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. There was also an engagement session available for all Elected Members. This engagement led to the Plan being framed around 5 themes:

- Every neighbourhood thriving.
- People are safe, healthy and live well.
- Every child able to fulfil their potential.
- Expanding economic opportunity.
- A cleaner, greener local environment.

There were 26 outcomes and 47 commitments include in the Plan.

In order to work towards the Council Plan, outcomes and achieve the commitments, a Year Ahead Delivery Plan had been developed which set out the key activities to be delivered from January 2022 to March 2023. This included 91 priority actions/milestones.

It was proposed that the first Council Plan progress report, covering the period January 2022 to March 2022, be reported to Cabinet in June 2022.

Cabinet Members gave an update on areas from their portfolios that were now included in the Plan. The Council was focusing on its leadership role across the Borough and particularly where it could have greater influence. Partnership working was recognised across all services as being essential to the future of the Borough; combining knowledge, ideas, expertise and resources to deliver tangible improvements, deliver efficiencies and economies of scale, and helping to strengthen communities.

In response to the presentation of the Plan Councillor Reynolds noted how key statistics were reported and asked if this could also include key findings. He also welcomed regeneration action in the Borough, particularly for key buildings in the town centre that had suffered neglect or vandalism.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester, along with Councillor Atkin, voiced their support and welcomed the continuation of the developing neighbourhood approach. The commitment to making the Borough a cleaner greener environment was welcomed.

Resolved:- (1) That the Council Plan 2022-2025 be adopted.

(2) That the Year Ahead Delivery Plan be adopted.

Mover: - Councillor Read

Seconded: - Councillor Allen

104. FREEMAN OF THE BOROUGH NOMINATION

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how under the Local Government Act 1972, the Council had the power to grant the title of Honorary Freewoman and Honorary Freeman of the Borough to persons of distinction who have rendered eminent service to the Borough.

The Council was, therefore, asked to consider a proposal endorsed by the Mayor and the Political Group Leaders, in accordance with the Authority's protocol in respect of the award of the Freedom of the Borough, to create a new Honorary Freeman.

A nomination to admit Gavin Walker as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Rotherham was submitted by Councillor Alan Atkin, with the support of 10 other Councillors in accordance with the provisions of Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972. This was in recognition of his outstanding commitment as a Paralympic Gold Medallist and inspiration to others to achieve against life changing events.

Resolved:- That in pursuance of the provisions of Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in recognition of his outstanding service to sport as an Olympic Gold Medalist Paralympian and inspiration to others facing adversity through life changing events, Gavin Walker, be admitted as an Honorary Freeman of this Borough at Annual Council.

Mover:- Councillor Atkin

Seconded:- Councillor Taylor

105. MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON THE COUNCIL, POLITICAL BALANCE AND ENTITLEMENT TO SEATS

Further to Minute No. 15 to the annual meeting of Council held on 26th May, 2021, consideration was given to the report which detailed how under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 Local Authorities had the duty to allocate seats to political groups and set out the principles to be followed when determining such allocation following formal notification of the establishment of political groups in operation on the Council.

There was a requirement to annually review the entitlement of the political groups to seats on the committees of the Council following 2 principles:-

- (a) Balance must be achieved across the total number of available seats on committees; and
- (b) Balance must be achieved on each individual committee or body where seats are available

There were presently 4 political groups in operation on the Council – the Labour Group (majority), Conservative Group (opposition), Liberal Democrat (Lib Dem) Group and Rotherham Democratic Party (RDP) Group – with one non-aligned Councillor (Members who were not in a political group).

As a result of 2 by-elections held on 9th December 2021 the political balance of the Council had changed.

There were 149 seats available on Committees, Boards and Panels and under the calculation the Labour Group was entitled to 83 seats, the Opposition Group (Conservative) 45 seats, the Liberal Democrat Group 10 seats, the Rotherham Democratic Party Group 8 seats. 3 seats were allocated to the non-aligned Councillor.

Resolved:- **(1) That the new political balance of the Council as a result of the by-election be noted.**

(2) That the entitlement of the membership of the political groups be agreed and such entitlements be reflected in Council's appointments of Members to committees.

(3) That the amendment of appointments of Members to Committees, Boards and Panels to reflect the change in political balance as notified by Group Leaders be confirmed as follows:-

Audit Committee

- Councillor Barley to be removed
- Councillor Wilson to be removed
- Councillor Wooding to be added
- Councillor Mills to be added

Licensing Board

- Councillor Bacon to be removed
- Councillor Castledine-Dack to be added
- Cllr Taylor to be added

Licensing Committee

- Councillor Bacon to be removed
- Councillor Castledine-Dack to be added

Planning Board:

- Councillor Carter to be removed
- Councillor Tarmey to be added
- Councillor Castledine-Dack to be removed
- Councillor Wilson to be removed
- Councillor Bacon to be added
- Councillor Burnett to be added

Standards and Ethics Committee:

- Councillor Tarmey to be added
- Councillor Castledine-Dack to be removed

Health Select Commission:

- Councillor Adam Carter to be added
- Councillor Hunter to be removed
- Councillor Wilson to be removed
- Councillor Whomersley to be added

Improving Lives Select Commission:

- Councillor Charlotte Carter to be removed
- Councillor Singleton to be removed
- Councillor Wilson to be removed
- Councillor Mills to be added
- Councillor Ian Jones to be added

Improving Places Select Commission:

- Councillor Miro to be removed
- Councillor Charlotte Carter to be added
- Councillor Bennett-Sylvester to be added
- Councillor Barley to be removed
- Councillor Whomersley to be removed
- Councillor Mills to be removed
- Councillor Singleton to be added
- Councillor Hunter to be added

Introductory Tenancy Review Panel:

- Councillor Mills to be removed
- Councillor Bennett-Sylvester to be added

Joint Consultative Committee:

- Councillor Castledine-Dack to be removed

Mover: - Councillor Read

Seconder: - Councillor Allen

106. EXTERNAL AUDIT RE-PROCUREMENT

Further to Minute No. 56 of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 30th November, 2021 consideration was given to the report which set out in detail the re-procurement of External Audit. The Council's current External Auditor was Grant Thornton under a contract managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA) and would expire at the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

The report set out the options available for the future procurement of the external audit function (below) and highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of each of the 3 options:-

- The Council could continue to take part in the national procurement undertaken by PSAA.
- Procure individually.
- Seek to carry out a joint procurement along with (probably) neighbouring local authorities and/or the Sheffield City Region.

If the Council was to independently procure its own external auditors this must be done by December, 2022.

Resolved:- That the recommendation to opt-in to the PSAA re-procurement of the external audit function be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Baker-Rodgers Second:- Councillor Browne

107. NOTICE OF MOTION - HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

It was moved by Councillor Miro and seconded by Councillor Tarmey that:-

This Council recognises:-

- The significant impact the Coronavirus pandemic has had on the country and the world.
- The excellent work of health and social care workers, especially during these unprecedented times.

This Council notes:-

- The under-funding of the NHS.
- The failure to train enough doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals for future careers in the NHS, and increased pressures pushing large numbers of experienced senior healthcare workers into early retirement.
- That in the context of a pandemic, the latest nationwide wholesale introduction of Integrated Care Systems (ICS) is poorly timed.
- The latest plans revert to a structure that was in place over a decade ago.
- That a postcode lottery on specialised services (such as IVF treatment) has sadly emerged throughout the country.
- That regular reorganisation of NHS services at the whim of the Health Secretary of the day harms good patient care.
- That arbitrary Government target-setting, diktats, and regulatory changes create a culture of instability, which can result in worse outcomes for patients.
- That a progressive reduction in inpatient beds has left the country ill-equipped to deal with current pressures and this has resulted in record waiting times to access essential services, including Emergency Departments across the region.
- That it can make improvements to the commissioning and delivery of high-quality social care.

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- The systematic undervaluing and underpaying of social care workers and that there are no new funding proposals for existing pressures.
- That the Government's new health and social care levy proposes no new funding towards existing funding pressures, demographic growth or inflation, with the expectation that these will be funded by council tax, social care precept and efficiencies.
- That the Government has failed to take account of the impact of their social care proposals on employee and provider costs.

Therefore this Council resolves:-

- To review the commissioning of social care services within the Borough at the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Board within 3months, placing particular focus on its intermediate care, respite care and locality-based providers of home care.
- To review the working conditions of social care providers in the Borough, with the aspiration that all social care staff in the Borough are paid a fair wage.
- To improve communication and collaboration with health and social care providers and focus on providing a comprehensive community hospital that focuses on rehabilitation and easing hospital bed pressures.

This Council also resolves to request that the Government:-

- Delays the proposed introduction of the ICS by 2 years, given the current pressures of the pandemic.
- Better addresses existing funding pressures, demographic growth and inflation within the new health and social care levy.
- Remove the punitive tax structures which force experienced health professionals into early retirement, to incentivise these health professionals to remain within the service.
- Removes immigration barriers from healthcare professionals from the European Union.
- Increase the number of healthcare professionals being trained within the country.
- Incentivise those taking healthcare degrees by improving the grant and bursary packages to make studying these courses more affordable.
- Better recognises comparative qualifications from abroad with established healthcare education, such as Australia, Singapore, and Canada.

At this point it was moved by Councillor Roche and seconded by Councillor Cusworth that the motion be amended as follows:-

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

The substantive motion now read:-

This Council recognises:-

- The significant impact the Coronavirus pandemic has had on the country and the world.
- The excellent work of health and social care workers, especially during these unprecedented times.

This Council notes:-

- The under-funding of the NHS.
- The failure to train enough doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals for future careers in the NHS, and increased pressures pushing large numbers of experienced senior healthcare workers into early retirement.
- That in the context of a pandemic, the latest nationwide wholesale introduction of Integrated Care Systems (ICS) is poorly timed.
- The latest plans revert to a structure that was in place over a decade ago.
- That a postcode lottery on specialised services (such as IVF treatment) has sadly emerged throughout the country.
- That regular reorganisation of NHS services at the whim of the Health Secretary of the day harms good patient care.
- That arbitrary Government target-setting, diktats, and regulatory changes create a culture of instability, which can result in worse outcomes for patients.
- That a progressive reduction in inpatient beds has left the country ill-equipped to deal with current pressures and this has resulted in record waiting times to access essential services, including Emergency Departments across the region.
- That it can make improvements to the commissioning and delivery of high-quality social care.
- The systematic undervaluing and underpaying of social care workers and that there are no new funding proposals for existing pressures.
- That the Government's new health and social care levy proposes no new funding towards existing funding pressures, demographic growth or inflation, with the expectation that these will be funded by council tax, social care precept and efficiencies.
- That the Government has failed to take account of the impact of their social care proposals on employee and provider costs.

Therefore this Council resolves: -

- To request the relevant Scrutiny Commissions give consideration as part of their regular work programme planning review the commissioning of social care services within the Borough placing particular focus on its intermediate care, respite care and locality-based providers of home care.

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- That such a review would consider the working conditions of social care providers in the Borough, with the aspiration that all social care staff in the Borough are paid at least the Real Living Wage.
- To continue to improve communication and collaboration with health and social care providers.

This Council also resolves to request that the Government:-

- Better addresses existing funding pressures, demographic growth and inflation within the new health and social care levy.
- Seek to incentivise experienced health professionals to remain within the service.
- Removes immigration barriers from healthcare professionals from the European Union.
- Increase the number of healthcare professionals being trained within the country.
- Incentivise those taking healthcare degrees by improving the grant and bursary packages to make studying these courses more affordable.
- Better recognises comparative qualifications from abroad with established healthcare education, such as Australia, Singapore, and Canada.

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

108. NOTICE OF MOTION - BETTER BUSES FOR ROTHERHAM

It was moved by Councillor Tarmey and seconded by Councillor A. Carter that:-

That this Council:-

- a. Notes that the extent of the South Yorkshire bus network has been cut by over 12 million kilometres since 2014 and understands that Rotherham residents on the lowest incomes have therefore been deprived of travel opportunities for the purposes of education, employment and social contact with their families.
- b. Notes the regional imbalances in funding for public transport services which prioritise the South of England and believes these to be unacceptable.
- c. Believes that a good public transport system should run where people need it, when people need it and at a price that is affordable.
- d. Understands that the Government's impact assessment of the Bus Service Act (2017) highlighted that public control would better address 6 out of 7 Local Transport Authority objectives compared to an enhanced partnership and was the only method likely to deliver a "significant increase in patronage".

- e. Welcomes the outcomes of the South Yorkshire Bus Review (2020), including the recommendation to immediately explore the legal and financial aspects of franchising in South Yorkshire.
- f. Believes that the Mayor of South Yorkshire must exercise powers to bring bus services back under local control (via franchising), at the earliest practicable date, and central government must do more to provide significant funding to revitalise local transport in the North.
- g. Acknowledges that the costs of franchising cannot be estimated accurately until a “notice of intent” has been released and the associated statutory powers to access bus operators' commercial data employed.

Therefore, this Council requests that the Administration:-

- (i) Inform the South Yorkshire Combined Authority of its support for conducting a statutory assessment of franchising at the earliest possible opportunity in 2022.
- (ii) Request a Combined Authority vote to release a notice of intent to prepare a franchising assessment within 6 months.

At this point it was moved by Councillor Read and seconded by Councillor Beck that the motion be amended as follows:-

That this Council:-

To insert the words “in part as a consequence of devastating Government cuts” after the word 2014 to now read:-

- h. Notes that the extent of the South Yorkshire bus network has been cut by over 12 million kilometres since 2014 ***in part as a consequence of devastating Government cuts*** and understands that Rotherham residents on the lowest incomes have been therefore been deprived of travel opportunities for the purposes of education, employment and social contact with their families.
- i. Notes the regional imbalances in funding for public transport services which prioritise the South of England and believes these to be unacceptable.
- j. Believes that a good public transport system should run where people need it, when people need it and at a price that is affordable.

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- k. Understands that the Government's impact assessment of the Bus Service Act (2017) highlighted that public control would better address six out of seven Local Transport Authority objectives compared to an enhanced partnership and was the only method likely to deliver a “significant increase in patronage”.
- l. Welcomes the outcomes of the South Yorkshire Bus Review (2020), including the recommendation to immediately explore the legal and financial aspects of franchising in South Yorkshire.
- m. ***[delete] Believes that the Mayor of South Yorkshire must exercise powers to bring bus services back under local control (via franchising), at the earliest practicable date, and [to here] [insert] Welcomes the significant steps taken already by the Mayor of South Yorkshire alongside Council leaders; including setting out clear objectives in the Bus Service Improvement Plan to cap bus fares, make buses more reliable through a series of bus priority measures, improve bus stops and real-time information, and move towards a zero emission bus fleet. [to here]***
- n. ***[insert] Notes that the Mayor of South Yorkshire has already set out his intention for the MCA to make a formal decision on investigating bus franchising within the next few weeks. [to here]***
- o. ***[insert] Believes that [to here] central government must do [insert] much [to here] more to provide significant funding to revitalise local transport in the North.***
- p. ***[deletes] Acknowledges that the costs of franchising cannot be estimated accurately until a “notice of intent” has been released and the associated statutory powers to access bus operators' commercial data employed. [to here]***

Therefore, this Council requests that the Administration:-

- (iii) Inform the South Yorkshire Combined Authority of its support for conducting a statutory assessment of franchising at the earliest possible opportunity in 2022, ***[insert] subject to the assessment itself having no financial implications for the Council. [to here]***
- (iv) ***[insert] Calls on the Government to fully fund South Yorkshire's £570 million City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, including the required significant investment in bus infrastructure, and the South Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan. [to here]***

- (v) ***[delete] Request a Combined Authority vote to release a notice of intent to prepare a franchising assessment within 6 months. [to here]***

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

The substantive motion now read:-

That this Council:-

- a. Notes that the extent of the South Yorkshire bus network has been cut by over 12 million kilometres since 2014 in part as a consequence of devastating Government cuts and understands that Rotherham residents on the lowest incomes have been therefore been deprived of travel opportunities for the purposes of education, employment and social contact with their families.
- b. Notes the regional imbalances in funding for public transport services which prioritise the South of England and believes these to be unacceptable.
- c. Believes that a good public transport system should run where people need it, when people need it and at a price that is affordable.
- d. Understands that the Government's impact assessment of the Bus Service Act (2017) highlighted that public control would better address 6 out of 7 Local Transport Authority objectives compared to an enhanced partnership and was the only method likely to deliver a "significant increase in patronage".
- e. Welcomes the outcomes of the South Yorkshire Bus Review (2020), including the recommendation to immediately explore the legal and financial aspects of franchising in South Yorkshire.
- f. Welcomes the significant steps taken already by the Mayor of South Yorkshire alongside Council leaders; including setting out clear objectives in the Bus Service Improvement Plan to cap bus fares, make buses more reliable through a series of bus priority measures, improve bus stops and real-time information, and move towards a zero emission bus fleet.
- g. Notes that the Mayor of South Yorkshire has already set out his intention for the MCA to make a formal decision on investigating bus franchising within the next few weeks.
- h. Believes that central government must to do much more to provide significant funding to revitalise local transport in the North.

Therefore, this Council requests that the Administration:-

- (i) Inform the South Yorkshire Combined Authority of its support for conducting a statutory assessment of franchising at the earliest possible opportunity in 2022, subject to the assessment itself having no financial implications for the Council.
- (ii) Calls on the Government to fully fund South Yorkshire's £570 million City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, including the required significant investment in bus infrastructure, and the South Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan.

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

109. NOTICE OF MOTION - CURRENT CONCERNS OVER THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE RESPONSE TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

It was moved by Councillor Barley and seconded by Councillor Baum-Dixon that:-

This Council notes:-

- On 23rd November 2021, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) published a report titled 'Operation Linden – Learning and Recommendations' in which it compared complaints around South Yorkshire Police's (SYP) handling of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) cases in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013 to current practice, highlighted a number of continuing problems in SYP's handling of CSE investigations, and made a series of recommendations to SYP.
- The IOPC said *"there is more work to be done to build on and maintain the knowledge and skills of South Yorkshire Police officers and staff"* and recommended *"South Yorkshire Police ensures knowledge and skills of those involved in child sexual exploitation work are kept up to date as part of their continuous improvement cycle."*
- The IOPC also pointed to a 2014 inspection of SYP police which found *"a cause for concern about crimes involving vulnerable adults and children reported directly to South Yorkshire Police's public protection department (mostly through professional third-party reports) were not all being recorded"* and noted that a 2020 re-inspection found *"significant under-recording of crimes committed against vulnerable children."* As a result, in its November 2021 report the IOPC recommended that: *"South Yorkshire Police takes steps to ensure that crime recording practice in its public protection departments is compliant with the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime."*

- The IOPC report highlighted continuing failings in the way SYP deals with victims of child sexual exploitation, including noting a lack of monitoring of compliance with The Victims' Code, failing to regularly update victims on progress in contravention of SYP's own policies, and a lack of understanding of the role of local independent sexual violence advisors (ISVAs) in supporting victims. As a result, the IOPC made a series of recommendations for SYP to:-
 - *“ensure it has a way of effectively monitoring compliance with the Victims' Code. This should include the quality of interactions between itself and others and not just a ‘tick box exercise’ of the various entitlements being made available.”*
 - *“take steps to ensure that victims are regularly updated, and at least once every 28 days, in line with expectations.”*
 - And *“continues to work with the local ISVA service to improve its working arrangements. This should include:-*
 - *“a named point of contact at South Yorkshire Police for use by the ISVA service*
 - *“ensuring that South Yorkshire Police representatives who have contact with victims and survivors fully understand the ISVA service's role and can explain this to others when needed*
 - *“agreement on how updates are provided to victims and survivors*
 - *“how the ISVA service could be involved in South Yorkshire Police training to help raise awareness about its role and responsibilities and how they can work together.”*
- In addition to these recommendations, the IOPC report contained a series of concerning statements, including:-
 - *“South Yorkshire Police has told us about many changes it has made since the matters we investigated took place. We have not assessed whether these changes have led to improvements in practice but remain worried that despite multiple reports and recommendations, there are still areas of concern.”*
 - *“Additionally, the ISVA service manager told us that although they had seen some improvement in 2015-16, there had been some deterioration since then.”*

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- In an article published on 23rd November 2021 on the IOPC's website introducing the 'Operation Linden – Learning and Recommendations' report, IOPC Director of Major Investigations, Steve Noonan said: *“Survivors of abuse will no doubt be deeply concerned, as are we, that some of these problems still exist today and we urge the police to act on these recommendations urgently to provide much needed reassurance to the public.”*

This Council also notes:-

- On 30th December 2021, *The Times* published an article titled 'Rotherham grooming scandal: Priti Patel says police must record ethnicity of child abuse suspects', containing information taken from SYP's internal document 'Child Exploitation Strategic Profile', from December 2019.
- According to *The Times*, the newspaper had originally requested a copy of the strategic profile in August 2020 under a Freedom of Information request and had been denied. Following appeals to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), SYP was forced to share the profile.
- *The Times* also reports that: *“The force admitted in internal emails that it was trying to block disclosure, freedom of information requests show. One officer said: “I think we need to stick to our guns as to do anything else would create an unwelcome precedent”.*
- SYP's own Child Exploitation Strategic Profile contains concerning admissions that SYP:-
 - Failed to record the ethnicity of suspects in 67% of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) non-cyber enabled cases in the Rotherham District in 2019, with this being worse than Doncaster (54%), Sheffield (52%), and Barnsley (47%).
 - Saw a 30% reduction in CSE offences reported despite a rising national trend. The report said: *“It is difficult to ascertain the reason why offending has reduced. However, PVP are dealing with competing demands with CCE, which in turn may have led to a reduction in proactively identifying CSE.”*
 - Did not have access to a series of data/information that may indicate that a child or young person is being exploited. These indicators included: children who have attended sexual health clinics with sexually transmitted infections, children requesting contraception at an early age, pregnancy or requesting terminations, children absent from school, children excluded from education, and children displaying sexually inappropriate behaviour.

- Identifies children repeatedly missing from home as a possible indicator of CSE, but says that: *"Currently the Missing from Home System is impacting on the Force's ability to deal with missing persons effectively as analytical opportunities are limited."*
- Identified Rotherham as a 'hotspot' for Child Sexual Exploitation in December 2019. The report states: *"Rotherham continues to be a 'hotspot' for CSE offending in South Yorkshire."*

This Council, therefore, resolves to:-

- Regularly monitor South Yorkshire Police's progress against recommendations made by the IOPC in its November 2021 report, with scrutiny arrangements to be determined by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as a matter of urgency.
- Ask the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to give consideration to including scrutiny of the issues raised in South Yorkshire Police's 2019 Child Exploitation Strategic Profile and by *The Times'* investigation in the above scrutiny arrangements.
- Ask the Leader of the Council and other Group Leaders to, individually or collectively, write to South Yorkshire Police Chief Constable Lauren Poultney and South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Dr Alan Billings:-
 - Expressing concerns in line with the IOPC that *"despite multiple reports and recommendations, there are still areas of concern"* in the way South Yorkshire Police handles CSE investigations;
 - Calling for urgent action to fully adopt all of the IOPC's recommendations and for SYP to co-operate with this Council's scrutiny arrangements to monitor progress; and
 - Urging the force to be more transparent with members of the public and press, including readily complying with Freedom of Information requests and establishing a regular publishing schedule of materials related to Child Sexual Exploitation and other matters – including publishing updates to the Child Exploitation Strategic Profile as they are produced internally – in order to avoid a repeat of the circumstances leading up to the article published by *The Times* referenced in this motion.

At this point it was moved by Councillor Read and seconded by Councillor Cusworth that the motion be amended. The amendment below was accepted and became the substantive motion:-

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This Council notes:-

- On 23rd November 2021, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) published a report titled 'Operation Linden – Learning and Recommendations' in which it compared complaints around South Yorkshire Police's (SYP) handling of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) cases in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013 to current practice, highlighted a number of continuing problems in SYP's handling of CSE investigations, and made a series of recommendations to SYP.
- The IOPC said *"there is more work to be done to build on and maintain the knowledge and skills of South Yorkshire Police officers and staff"* and recommended *"South Yorkshire Police ensures knowledge and skills of those involved in child sexual exploitation work are kept up to date as part of their continuous improvement cycle."*
- The IOPC also pointed to a 2014 inspection of SYP police which found *"a cause for concern about crimes involving vulnerable adults and children reported directly to South Yorkshire Police's public protection department (mostly through professional third-party reports) were not all being recorded"* and noted that a 2020 re-inspection found *"significant under-recording of crimes committed against vulnerable children."* As a result, in its November 2021 report the IOPC recommended that: *"South Yorkshire Police takes steps to ensure that crime recording practice in its public protection departments is compliant with the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime."*
- The IOPC report highlighted continuing failings in the way SYP deals with victims of child sexual exploitation, including noting a lack of monitoring of compliance with The Victims' Code, failing to regularly update victims on progress in contravention of SYP's own policies, and a lack of understanding of the role of local independent sexual violence advisors (ISVAs) in supporting victims. As a result, the IOPC made a series of recommendations for SYP to:-
 - *"ensure it has a way of effectively monitoring compliance with the Victims' Code. This should include the quality of interactions between itself and others and not just a 'tick box exercise' of the various entitlements being made available."*
 - *"take steps to ensure that victims are regularly updated, and at least once every 28 days, in line with expectations."*
 - And *"continues to work with the local ISVA service to improve its working arrangements. This should include:-"*
 - *"a named point of contact at South Yorkshire Police for use by the ISVA service"*

- *“ensuring that South Yorkshire Police representatives who have contact with victims and survivors fully understand the ISVA service’s role and can explain this to others when needed*
 - *“agreement on how updates are provided to victims and survivors*
 - *“how the ISVA service could be involved in South Yorkshire Police training to help raise awareness about its role and responsibilities and how they can work together.”*
- In addition to these recommendations, the IOPC report contained a series of concerning statements, including:-
 - *“South Yorkshire Police has told us about many changes it has made since the matters we investigated took place. We have not assessed whether these changes have led to improvements in practice but remain worried that despite multiple reports and recommendations, there are still areas of concern.”*
 - *“Additionally, the ISVA service manager told us that although they had seen some improvement in 2015-16, there had been some deterioration since then.”*
 - In an article published on 23rd November 2021 on the IOPC’s website introducing the ‘Operation Linden – Learning and Recommendations’ report, IOPC Director of Major Investigations, Steve Noonan said: *“Survivors of abuse will no doubt be deeply concerned, as are we, that some of these problems still exist today and we urge the police to act on these recommendations urgently to provide much needed reassurance to the public.”*

This Council also notes:-

- On 30th December 2021, *The Times* published an article titled ‘Rotherham grooming scandal: Priti Patel says police must record ethnicity of child abuse suspects’, containing information taken from SYP’s internal document ‘Child Exploitation Strategic Profile’, from December 2019.
- According to *The Times*, the newspaper had originally requested a copy of the strategic profile in August 2020 under a Freedom of Information request and had been denied. Following appeals to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO), SYP was forced to share the profile.
- *The Times* also reports that: *“The force admitted in internal emails that it was trying to block disclosure, freedom of information requests show. One officer said: “I think we need to stick to our guns as to do anything else would create an unwelcome precedent”.*

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- SYP's own Child Exploitation Strategic Profile contains concerning admissions that SYP:-
 - Failed to record the ethnicity of suspects in 67% of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) non-cyber enabled cases in the Rotherham District in 2019, with this being worse than Doncaster (54%), Sheffield (52%), and Barnsley (47%).
 - Saw a 30% reduction in CSE offences reported despite a rising national trend. The report said: *"It is difficult to ascertain the reason why offending has reduced. However, PVP are dealing with competing demands with CCE, which in turn may have led to a reduction in proactively identifying CSE."*
 - Did not have access to a series of data/information that may indicate that a child or young person is being exploited. These indicators included: children who have attended sexual health clinics with sexually transmitted infections, children requesting contraception at an early age, pregnancy or requesting terminations, children absent from school, children excluded from education, and children displaying sexually inappropriate behaviour.
 - Identifies children repeatedly missing from home as a possible indicator of CSE, but says that: *"Currently the Missing from Home System is impacting on the Force's ability to deal with missing persons effectively as analytical opportunities are limited."*
 - Identified Rotherham as a 'hotspot' for Child Sexual Exploitation in December 2019. The report states: *"Rotherham continues to be a 'hotspot' for CSE offending in South Yorkshire."*
- ***[insert] That the Leader of Rotherham Council has already written twice to the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police to raise his concerns and seek assurances in relation to these matters.***

Further notes:-

- ***That in a letter to Rotherham MP Sarah Champion dated 16th November, the Government has confirmed that it does not intend to continue to support Rotherham Council with costs associated with Operation Stovewood, effectively cutting resources to help survivors of CSE to secure justice by half a million pounds a year.***

This Council, therefore, resolves to:-

- Regularly monitor South Yorkshire Police's progress against recommendations made by the IOPC in its November 2021 report, with scrutiny arrangements to be determined by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as a matter of urgency.
- Ask the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to give consideration to including scrutiny of the issues raised in South Yorkshire Police's 2019 Child Exploitation Strategic Profile and by *The Times*' investigation in the above scrutiny arrangements.
- Ask the ***[delete] Leader of the Council and other [to here]*** Group Leaders to, ***[delete] individually or collectively, [to here] [insert] follow the example of the Council Leader and [to here]*** write to South Yorkshire Police Chief Constable Lauren Poultney and South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Dr Alan Billings:-
 - Expressing concerns in line with the IOPC that "*despite multiple reports and recommendations, there are still areas of concern*" in the way South Yorkshire Police handles CSE investigations;
 - Calling for urgent action to fully adopt all of the IOPC's recommendations and for SYP to co-operate with this Council's scrutiny arrangements to monitor progress; and
 - Urging the force to be more transparent with members of the public and press, including readily complying with Freedom of Information requests and establishing a regular publishing schedule of materials related to Child Sexual Exploitation and other matters – including publishing updates to the Child Exploitation Strategic Profile as they are produced internally – in order to avoid a repeat of the circumstances leading up to the article published by *The Times* referenced in this motion.
- ***[insert] Calls on the Government to renew the level of commitment it has shown until this time to supporting Operation Stovewood, by putting in place a sustainable funding package towards the Council's costs of no less than £500,000 per year, until the conclusion of criminal proceedings. [to here]***

The motion now reads:-

This Council notes:-

- On 23rd November 2021, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) published a report titled 'Operation Linden – Learning and Recommendations' in which it compared complaints around South Yorkshire Police's (SYP) handling of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) cases in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013 to current practice,

highlighted a number of continuing problems in SYP's handling of CSE investigations, and made a series of recommendations to SYP.

- The IOPC said *“there is more work to be done to build on and maintain the knowledge and skills of South Yorkshire Police officers and staff”* and recommended *“South Yorkshire Police ensures knowledge and skills of those involved in child sexual exploitation work are kept up to date as part of their continuous improvement cycle.”*
- The IOPC also pointed to a 2014 inspection of SYP police which found *“a cause for concern about crimes involving vulnerable adults and children reported directly to South Yorkshire Police’s public protection department (mostly through professional third-party reports) were not all being recorded”* and noted that a 2020 re-inspection found *“significant under-recording of crimes committed against vulnerable children.”* As a result, in its November 2021 report the IOPC recommended that: *“South Yorkshire Police takes steps to ensure that crime recording practice in its public protection departments is compliant with the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime.”*
- The IOPC report highlighted continuing failings in the way SYP deals with victims of child sexual exploitation, including noting a lack of monitoring of compliance with The Victims’ Code, failing to regularly update victims on progress in contravention of SYP’s own policies, and a lack of understanding of the role of local independent sexual violence advisors (ISVAs) in supporting victims. As a result, the IOPC made a series of recommendations for SYP to:-
 - *“ensure it has a way of effectively monitoring compliance with the Victims’ Code. This should include the quality of interactions between itself and others and not just a ‘tick box exercise’ of the various entitlements being made available.”*
 - *“take steps to ensure that victims are regularly updated, and at least once every 28 days, in line with expectations.”*
 - And *“continues to work with the local ISVA service to improve its working arrangements. This should include:-*
 - *“a named point of contact at South Yorkshire Police for use by the ISVA service*
 - *“ensuring that South Yorkshire Police representatives who have contact with victims and survivors fully understand the ISVA service’s role and can explain this to others when needed*
 - *“agreement on how updates are provided to victims and survivors*

- *“how the ISVA service could be involved in South Yorkshire Police training to help raise awareness about its role and responsibilities and how they can work together.”*
- In addition to these recommendations, the IOPC report contained a series of concerning statements, including:-
 - *“South Yorkshire Police has told us about many changes it has made since the matters we investigated took place. We have not assessed whether these changes have led to improvements in practice but remain worried that despite multiple reports and recommendations, there are still areas of concern.”*
 - *“Additionally, the ISVA service manager told us that although they had seen some improvement in 2015-16, there had been some deterioration since then.”*
- In an article published on 23rd November 2021 on the IOPC’s website introducing the ‘Operation Linden – Learning and Recommendations’ report, IOPC Director of Major Investigations, Steve Noonan said: *“Survivors of abuse will no doubt be deeply concerned, as are we, that some of these problems still exist today and we urge the police to act on these recommendations urgently to provide much needed reassurance to the public.”*

This Council also notes:-

- On 30th December 2021, *The Times* published an article titled ‘Rotherham grooming scandal: Priti Patel says police must record ethnicity of child abuse suspects’, containing information taken from SYP’s internal document ‘Child Exploitation Strategic Profile’, from December 2019.
- According to *The Times*, the newspaper had originally requested a copy of the strategic profile in August 2020 under a Freedom of Information request and had been denied. Following appeals to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO), SYP was forced to share the profile.
- *The Times* also reports that: *“The force admitted in internal emails that it was trying to block disclosure, freedom of information requests show. One officer said: “I think we need to stick to our guns as to do anything else would create an unwelcome precedent”.*
- SYP’s own Child Exploitation Strategic Profile contains concerning admissions that SYP:-

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- Failed to record the ethnicity of suspects in 67% of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) non-cyber enabled cases in the Rotherham District in 2019, with this being worse than Doncaster (54%), Sheffield (52%), and Barnsley (47%).
- Saw a 30% reduction in CSE offences reported despite a rising national trend. The report said: *"It is difficult to ascertain the reason why offending has reduced. However, PVP are dealing with competing demands with CCE, which in turn may have led to a reduction in proactively identifying CSE."*
- Did not have access to a series of data/information that may indicate that a child or young person is being exploited. These indicators included: children who have attended sexual health clinics with sexually transmitted infections, children requesting contraception at an early age, pregnancy or requesting terminations, children absent from school, children excluded from education, and children displaying sexually inappropriate behaviour.
- Identifies children repeatedly missing from home as a possible indicator of CSE, but says that: *"Currently the Missing from Home System is impacting on the Force's ability to deal with missing persons effectively as analytical opportunities are limited."*
- Identified Rotherham as a 'hotspot' for Child Sexual Exploitation in December 2019. The report states: *"Rotherham continues to be a 'hotspot' for CSE offending in South Yorkshire."*
- That the Leader of Rotherham Council has already written twice to the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police to raise his concerns and seek assurances in relation to these matters.

Further notes:-

- That in a letter to Rotherham MP Sarah Champion dated 16th November, the Government has confirmed that it does not intend to continue to support Rotherham Council with costs associated with Operation Stovewood, effectively cutting resources to help survivors of CSE to secure justice by half a million pounds a year.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:-

- Regularly monitor South Yorkshire Police's progress against recommendations made by the IOPC in its November 2021 report, with scrutiny arrangements to be determined by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as a matter of urgency.

- Ask the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to give consideration to including scrutiny of the issues raised in South Yorkshire Police's 2019 Child Exploitation Strategic Profile and by *The Times*' investigation in the above scrutiny arrangements.
- Ask the Group Leaders to, follow the example of the Council Leader and write to South Yorkshire Police Chief Constable Lauren Poultney and South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Dr Alan Billings:-
 - Expressing concerns in line with the IOPC that "*despite multiple reports and recommendations, there are still areas of concern*" in the way South Yorkshire Police handles CSE investigations;
 - Calling for urgent action to fully adopt all of the IOPC's recommendations and for SYP to co-operate with this Council's scrutiny arrangements to monitor progress; and
 - Urging the force to be more transparent with members of the public and press, including readily complying with Freedom of Information requests and establishing a regular publishing schedule of materials related to Child Sexual Exploitation and other matters – including publishing updates to the Child Exploitation Strategic Profile as they are produced internally – in order to avoid a repeat of the circumstances leading up to the article published by *The Times* referenced in this motion.
- Calls on the Government to renew the level of commitment it has shown until this time to supporting Operation Stovewood, by putting in place a sustainable funding package towards the Council's costs of no less than £500,000 per year, until the conclusion of criminal proceedings.

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

110. 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 Griffin

111. AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

Mover:- Councillor Baker-Rodgers

Seconder:- Councillor Browne

112. 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 Cusworth

113. PLANNING BOARD

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

Mover:- Councillor Atkin

Seconder:- Councillor Bird

114. LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE AND LICENSING 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 Ellis

Seconder:- Councillor Hughes

115. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

The question from Councillor Tarmey would be responded to in writing in the absence of the designated Spokesperson.

116. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

(1) Councillor Whomersley asked how many street sweeping machines did RMBC own, hire or lease that could be used in Dinnington High Street and Outdoor Markets, and could the Ward get the usage of one to help clean on a regular basis.

Councillor Beck explained that due to the investments made in recent years, the Council now has 3 large mechanical road sweepers and 3 mini sweepers.

Dinnington High Street benefitted from regular cleaning by the local zonal cleaning team. Any cleaning required was generally undertaken manually by that team at the same time as emptying the litter bins and any other required work.

The Cabinet Member was advised that given that there was daily attendance in Dinnington the mini sweeper was not generally used unless it was required for work that could not be undertaken manually.

However, Councillor Whomersley was advised that any member with requests for works of this kind should speak to the Manager of the relevant zonal team, which in his case was Andy Roddis.

In a supplementary question Councillor Whomersley asked if the cleaning scheduled could be shared with him.

Councillor Beck agreed to send a copy to Councillor Whomersley.

(2) Councillor Ball asked how many children took up the offer of Beat The Street in Maltby, Hellaby and Hooton Levitt?

Councillor Roche explained that the Beat The Street programme saw 11,215 players register for the Rotherham 'Game', with registrants coming from every Ward in the Borough and 413 registrants from postcodes outside of the Borough.

Information for the scheme was held by Ward and Maltby, Hellaby and Hooton Levitt were covered by the Hellaby and Maltby West Ward which had 107 registered players and Maltby East Ward which had 36 registered players totalling in 143. Overall, 64% of participants were aged 0-18 years.

In a supplementary question Councillor Ball explained the need for more programmes such as Beat The Street as bus services had been suspended in the evening and young people needed more things to do. He asked whether there were plans to continue with such programmes?

Councillor Roche agreed that such programmes did need to continue. However the funding for the Beat The Street Programme was external, coming from the Department of Transport's Active Travel Grant programme and Sport England and was not able to cover all areas within the Borough. He agreed that projects needed to continue and should external grants become available, the Council would look at delivering programmes with the Wards that were not covered.

(3) Councillor C. Carter asked did the Cabinet Member agree that there should be more location-based (as opposed to person-based) funding and resource for youth work to tackle problem areas, such as the so-called Black Path in Brinsworth?

Councillor Cusworth confirmed in an ideal world both she and others would all like to see more activities for children and young people. However, once the former Coalition Government had cut a billion pounds from the Early Intervention Grant, Rotherham, like Councils across the country, had to make difficult decisions about how to use vastly reduced resources.

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This year the Council have been able to use grant to invest in places to go and things to do for young people, with over £193,000 distributed to partner agencies creating over 3,800 additional opportunities for young people to access across the Borough in 2021. The Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) secured from the DfE had also provided additional activities at Easter, Summer and Winter to compliment this.

What the Cabinet Member would not want to see was the Council moving away from the kind of targeted youth work interventions with individuals that made a huge difference in their lives, sometimes really turning lives around and preventing children from getting into greater need and coming into Social Care services.

In an adjoining Ward the Cabinet Member was pleased to report on the Youth Art Project working on street art and the boards located on Library buildings. She was happy to discuss any specific issues with the Councillor Carter outside of this meeting if she so wished.

(4) Councillor Tinsley asked whether the Council were considering introducing a reporting app where, for example, litter and flytipping could be reported? He explained that it could be like the Fix My Street App.

Councillor Beck explained that this was not under consideration but that the Council were always looking for way to make it easier for customers to access services. Whilst there were no current plans to introduce an 'App' specifically for reporting littering and flytipping, a number of enhancements would be implemented over the next few months including adding GPS location services for people reporting via their mobile phones, to improve the current online forms and make them easier for customers to make reports.

Councillor Beck further explained that the Fix My Street App generally forwarded reports to the Council for further investigation and in some cases, added another layer of bureaucracy that can slow down responses. For that reason, he encouraged people who wanted to report issues online to do so directly. Customers could also contact services in writing or by phone if it was more suitable to their individual needs.

In a supplementary question Councillor Tinsley asked the Cabinet Member to review the online forms as they were not easy to use on smartphones and could take a long time to complete.

Councillor Beck explained that there was a project underway looking at all online forms to ensure progress continued to be made. He agreed that they should be reviewed.

(5) Councillor A. Carter referred to an incident last month where a young person was seriously injured in a road traffic accident in a car on Whitehill Lane between the junctions of Rothbury Way and Buckingham Way and asked would the Council commit to reviewing safety measures on this road and coming up with a plan to make the road safer?

Councillor Beck was sorry to hear about this road traffic collision in Councillor Carter's Ward and wished to send on good wishes to the young person involved and their family.

Although some calming works and a crossing were completed a few years ago, there were no schemes currently under evaluation for this site. As the Councillor may know, the Council based interventions both on accident records and over the last 3 years on requests from Ward Councillors into the Neighbourhood Road Safety Fund. The Cabinet Member understood this area had previously been requested for consideration, but again not during the current year.

The Cabinet Member had requested that the Road Safety Team visit the site to assess whether any other factors existed which were contributing to accidents such as the one which occurred last month, and depending on their findings to consider what steps may be appropriate.

In a supplementary question Councillor A. Carter asked about reviewing the position and asked if access could be given to data specifically that could be in public form to see if there was an issue in this area and if traffic calming measures could be considered such as speed bumps or a crossing.

Councillor Beck was not aware of specific data available, but would take the comments away for professional analysis with the Road Safety Team, but would keep Ward Councillors up-to-date on what may be possible.

(6) Councillor Tinsley explained that the restoration of Maltby tip was around 3 years away. He suggested that the future use of the surrounding site could include a heritage centre to exhibit the history of Maltby and the surrounding area which included mining and the Royal Ordnance Factory where the Lee Enfield Rifle was once made. Councillor Tinsley asked whether the Council would commit to producing a bid for external funding?

Councillor Sheppard explained that the Council's Heritage Service was willing to work with all local Members, or any other interested parties on opportunities to celebrate Maltby's strong heritage. However he had been advised that the Council was not aware of anyone developing a plan for this nor any external funding schemes that might be appropriate for the kind of scheme Councillor Tinsley had described.

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In a supplementary question Councillor Tinsley suggested that the National Lottery Heritage Fund could be an option and asked whether Councillor Sheppard would meet with him to look in more detail at the option?

Councillor Sheppard agreed to a meeting and asked Councillor Tinsley to arrange the date.

(7) Councillor Ball referred to the calling of a climate emergency and asked what had been done to combat this in Rotherham from the last full Council meeting?

Councillor Lelliott explained the Council had reaffirmed its commitment to a cleaner, greener local environment through the new Council Plan which was being considered as part of this agenda. Within the Plan there was a series of activities and actions that would help to drive forward progress to the targets set. Specifically in the last few months:-

- Work had started on developing the Rotherham Climate Strategy as well as finalising the Annual Report which would be brought to Cabinet in March.
- A dedicated Data Analyst role to help more accurately measure carbon emissions from day-to-day Council business which was a key part of delivering the Climate Action plan.
- Completed a baseline of emissions from areas such as the Council's fleet and buildings which would help calculate progress towards Net Zero target by 2030.
- Improved the energy efficiency at 217 homes (The Lanes).
- Secured £140,000 for tree planting in urban areas, from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund.
- Continue to promote Active Travel, which included significant investment in cycle lanes (such as the new lanes along Sheffield Road in Templeborough) as well as a new Cycling Strategy which was on the agenda for the next Cabinet meeting.
- During the construction of the new Canal Barrier in the town centre normal concrete was substituted for an Earth Friendly alternative which saw carbon emissions reduced by 76%.

In a supplementary question Councillor Ball explained that driving through Hellaby he could witness 15 electric charging point spaces being taken up by diesel vans. He asked the Cabinet Member how she had been transported to the meeting today.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed she had travelled to the meeting in her own diesel vehicle. She referred to the operation of the Members' Working Group, open to all Elected Members, to put their view and offer support. There was a need for electric vehicles, but this came at a cost and not everyone was able to afford one with very limited disposal income. It was, therefore, suggested that Councillor Ball join the Council in lobbying Government to make electric vehicles more affordable.

(8) Councillor Tinsley stated that construction of the new housing estate on Grange Lane, Maltby had now commenced and as such, asked whether the Council would undertake detailed modelling of traffic at the Queen's Corner Junction and look to implement improvements to ease traffic congestion and the risk of further accidents?

Councillor Beck explained that as part of the planning approval for the new housing development, the Council secured a financial contribution from the developer to improve the signalised junction at Queens crossroads. This was the result of reviewing traffic modelling that had been undertaken in association with the new development. The funding would provide a new controller to make the traffic signals more responsive and able to adapt to the prevailing traffic conditions. These measures should help improve the efficiency of the signalised crossroads. Once the works were in place for a period of time, the junction would be assessed for its effectiveness and if necessary any further works considered.

In a supplementary question Councillor Tinsley asked if the improvements could include priority turning?

Councillor Beck explained that he was not aware of any improvements relating to priority turning but would look into the matter and provide a further response in writing.

(9) Councillor Tarmey asked, in the context of the increasing cost of energy and uncertainties in the national policy on fracking, did the administration agree with him that fracking should be banned, and would commit to do everything it could do stop fracking from happening in Woodsetts and elsewhere in the Borough?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the Council had an established record and policy to protect Rotherham against fracking.

At the meeting of the Council on 18th October, 2017, the Council called on the Government to institute a national ban and committed to not allow any fracking activities, including survey work, on Council-owned or controlled land and property. It was actually specifically noted that day the regret that the former Liberal Democrat Minister at the time had lifted the national moratorium on fracking.

Two planning applications have been submitted in relation to fracking in Rotherham. One in Harthill and one in Woodsetts. Both of these

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applications were refused by the Council on planning grounds to protect the locality.

Both refused applications were appealed. In the first appeal, the refusal of the Harthill application was overturned, and permission granted. This was a blow to local interests and the protection of local communities. Fortunately for local residents, this planning permission lapsed without being commenced before June of last year.

The real test to come now was for the Government to decide what to do about the Woodsetts appeal. The decision on this appeal was called in for the Secretary of State to determine. A decision should have been taken by April 2020, but nearly 2 years later still no decision had been made. This had created uncertainty and the prospect of an approval hanging over the local community.

The Council believed had made clear its position on fracking and await the Secretary of State's decision for Woodsetts.

In a supplementary question Councillor Tarmey asked if the Council at this time remain resolutely opposed to fracking in the Borough?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the Council was fully committed to not allowing fracking.

(10) Councillor Miro asked where the garden waste collected by the Council ended up, whether any of it was used for compost or if any consideration had been given to the use of anaerobic digestors to get maximum benefit from the waste?

Councillor Beck confirmed that all of the garden waste collected from residents by the Council was currently turned into compost. It was collected by the Council and taken to a transfer station before being transported to either Hull or West Yorkshire. The waste was then turned into compost which was then sold by the contractor for both commercial and domestic uses.

The waste material was composted using aerobic methods which are similar to those used in a compost heap at home. This was generally considered the most efficient and economic way to compost garden waste and met all required standards.

In a supplementary question Councillor Miro explained that it had been suggested that anaerobically digesting waste from grass cutting in the UK could potentially remove the need to import gas for heating homes. He asked whether the Council had any plans or if anything could be put in place to use some of the product of that for heating Council homes, at least as a prelude to increasing the use of a renewable energy in the UK market?

Councillor Beck stated that it was an interesting idea but one that the Council was not in a position to consider at that moment in time. However, the Council was on a journey in trying to embrace and learn about environmentally friendly ways of reusing the waste produced.

(11) Councillor Ball asked how much was it costing the taxpayers of Rotherham to have meetings away from the Chamber?

The Leader confirmed that up to and including this meeting date the associated costs of holding meetings away from the Council Chamber were total of £29,055.

All charges relating to hosting meetings away from the Council Chamber have been covered by the Government Covid Grant.

(12) Councillor Hoddinott explained that a number of hospitals in the country had declared a critical incident. She asked what the situation at Rotherham Hospital was and how it was impacting on Council services?

Councillor Roche explained that Rotherham Hospital had not declared a critical incident during the current rise of COVID transmissions but it had been close to doing so and remained under significant pressure. The hospital had to manage an increase in patients being admitted with COVID or transmission in hospital. This had not translated to a significant increase in people requiring critical care but did significantly disrupt the operation of the hospital concerning elective surgery and configuration of wards to manage infections and treatment. Councillor Roche confirmed that, at the time of the Council meeting, there were 2 COVID patients requiring critical care and that COVID rates across the Borough were down on the previous week.

Councillor Roche also explained that although Rotherham Hospital had not declared a critical incident, the options available to ensure timely and appropriate discharge from hospitals into social care settings was limited due to COVID outbreaks, for example into care homes. There were daily operational calls and regular escalation calls both operationally and with the senior executives across the hospital, Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group and Adult Social Care to monitor the situation and this included discussions with NHSE where appropriate. The demand levels within the Trust fluctuated, however, overall the hospital and the wider social care market continued to be fragile. The partnership was, however, strong and effective having been built up over the last years. This had been confirmed by LGA reviews.

There had to be flexibility in relation to hospital flow due to a number of COVID outbreaks in the Council's local authority homes. As such the decision was taken to use respite facilities at Conway Crescent to assist with hospital flow at Christmas. This was contained in a decision record. It will be reviewed weekly and normal service for people with learning disabilities and their cares will resume as soon as practically possible.

In a supplementary question Councillor Hoddinott expressed concerns about the pressures on the NHS and Adult Social Care. She reported that Yorkshire Ambulance Service had suspended some of its non-emergency services which would mean many vulnerable people would not be able to access their appointments. Councillor Hoddinott asked the Cabinet Member for his views on this situation.

Councillor Roche explained that he was aware of the situation and found it most concerning. He reported that some people were being told to make their own way to hospital which he described as diabolical. He explained that there had been many years of underfunding and the entire situation was extremely concerning.

(13) Councillor Tinsley referred to pavements across Maltby now turning into paths that you would associate when rambling. Having had multiple reports of people having had accidents he asked when would programmes for improvements be instigated?

Councillor Beck confirmed the Council had invested around £900,000 to repair pavements as part of the Highway Repair Programme in the 2021/22 financial year and would invest around a million pounds repairing and improving pavements across Rotherham in 2022/23. This year the Council would improve over 11 kilometres of footways through 31 schemes.

The design team were currently evaluating schemes for inclusion in next year's programme and the opportunity to repair sections of the footway network in Maltby would be considered.

In a supplementary question Councillor Tinsley confirmed he could name a few pavements which were in dire need of report.

Councillor Beck welcomed Councillor Tinsley sending details on.

(14) Councillor Bacon stated that he had noticed the less than desirable state of Rotherham Interchange and asked what the Council was doing to ensure something was done so that residents in Aston and Todwick and throughout the rest of the Borough had the best level of service?

Councillor Beck explained that Rotherham Interchange was subject to a recent £12 million refurbishment in 2019 as part of a wider investment in the whole building. It was managed by South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority which held responsibility for the former South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive. He explained that he would be happy to raise any specific concerns Councillor Bacon may have with SYPTE if those were sent to him.

In a supplementary question Councillor Bacon stated that he believed the Interchange to be filthy, that there were tiles missing and all sorts of other things wrong. He asked the Cabinet Member if the investment had included a maintenance plan and how could he trust that the Forge Island development would not have the same issues?

Councillor Beck explained that there had been huge improvements to the Interchange and that he had been impressed each time he had visited. He reiterated that if there were any specific issues, he would raise them.

(15) Councillor Tinsley referred to there being a surge of developments of HMO's in Maltby. Development of HMO's with occupancy below 6 residents was allowed under permitted development rights. No objections or "material considerations" could be made as no planning permission was required. He asked would RMBC consider looking to opt out of the regulation that allowed HMOs to be developed under permitted development rights?

Councillor Lelliott explained a decision to opt out of the Government imposed national planning regulations which allowed HMOs to be developed under permitted development rights would require significant evidence of an issue being caused by HMOs in the area, together with widespread public consultation, and subsequent sign off by the Secretary of State – this was not something that was simply within the Council's control.

In a supplementary question Councillor Tinsley was aware this was happening and asked if the Cabinet Member would look at this Borough wide.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed she would sit down with officers and put a case together if it was confirmed there was sufficient evidence of problems in the area to meet these requirements. She asked Councillor Tinsley if he had any evidence of this then could he please forward on.

117. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for consideration.