COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday 22 May 2024

Present:- Councillor Sheila Cowen (in the Chair); Councillors Haleem, Adair, Ahmed, Alam, Allen, Bacon, Baker-Rogers, Baum-Dixon, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Beresford, Blackham, Bower, Brent, A. Carter, C. Carter, Castledine-Dack, Clarke, T. Collingham, Z. Collingham, Currie, Cusworth, Duncan, Elliott, Fisher, Foster, Garnett, Hall, N Harper, Havard, Hughes, Hussain, Jackson, Jones, Keenan, Knight, Lelliott, Marshall, Mault, McKiernan, Monk, Rashid, Read, Reynolds, Ryalls, Sheppard, Stables, Steele, Sutton, Taylor, Thorp, Tinsley, Williams and Yasseen.

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

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had been proud to host the annual Mayor's Parade and Civic Service on 18 May as the newly elected Mayor of Rotherham. She had also attended the Royal Garden Party on 21 May. The Mayor was looking forward to her term of office and would provide a fuller engagement overview at the next meeting.

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Baggaley, Ball, Pitchley and Tarmey.

11. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 28 February 2024 be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover: Councillor Read Seconder: Councillor Allen

12. PETITIONS

Consideration was given to the report which confirmed the receipt of two petitions that had been received since the last Council meeting. The first was in opposition to the proposed Racecourse Road Speed Humps in Swinton, submitted by Mr Lewis Mills. This had received 101 valid signatures. The second was in support of the proposed Racecourse Road Speed Humps in Swinton, submitted by Mr Anthony Johnson. This had received 140 valid signatures.

In accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, the lead petitioner, or a representative on behalf of the lead petitioner, could speak at the Council meeting for up to five minutes. Mr Mills was unable to attend and had not appointed a representative. As such, his petition was referred directly to the Interim Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment for a

response.

Mr Johnson was also unable to attend but Mr Fowler attended and read a speech on behalf of Mr Johnson. Following the speech the petition was referred to the Interim Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment for a response.

Resolved:

1. That the petitions be received, and the contents noted.

2. That each lead petitioner receive a written response from the Interim Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment, in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, by 6 June 2024.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

14. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following public questions had been received:

1. From Mr Richard Green:

How many contracts does RMBC have with YPO for the purchase of gas supplies and if it is only a single contract, how is the supply split between business and domestic usage in terms of cost?

Mr Green was unable to attend the meeting and a written response would be provided.

2. From Ms Nida Khan:

As we are all aware time is running out we have no clarity on what is happening with the planning Permission.

What does RMBC started putting in place if the planning application is not successful? Where will be the new site for the burials for the Muslim community?

Ms Khan was unable to attend the meeting and a written response would be provided.

3. From Ms Shazia Yousaf:

What is the Council doing about the issues raised by Dignity recently that the extension at Herringthorpe Cemetery cannot go through due to being unable to satisfy the EA following borehole testing?

Ms Yousaf was unable to attend the meeting and a written response would be provided.

4. From Mr Adeel Hussain:

Why is the Council intentionally causing the closure of thriving local businesses on Westgate by unnecessarily extending disruptive cycling and hazardous roadworks that received no support from businesses or residents and will impact business detrimentally?

Councillor Taylor thanked Mr Hussain for his question and for sharing his concern about the new cycle route on Westgate and Sheffield Road. Councillor Taylor stated that he understood that changes to local infrastructure could be challenging, and that feedback was appreciated. It was explained that similar schemes were causing the same sort of disruption across the country because of the built up environment.

It was worth starting with why infrastructure schemes like this were built. First and foremost, it was not simply about the cycle lanes. The scheme had introduced safer places to cross the road, wider pavements and traffic calming to slow down vehicles which were increasingly required as Sheffield Road became a more residential area, and ahead of potentially hundreds more new homes along the route in the coming years. The scheme also included a significant amount of road resurfacing and filling potholes, from the Town Centre, all the way to Magna. Cycling of course promoted healthier lifestyles and was more environmentally friendly. But more broadly, it was about providing people with choices about how to travel into the town centre – both for current users and future generations.

In his supplementary question, Mr Hussain stated that on Westgate, most evening trade businesses were owned by members of the BAME community. He asked how the Council expected restaurants and food businesses who had been majorly disrupted for three weeks in the peak business hours to survive? He also asked why the businesses were not consulted? Mr Hussain stated that it was clear that Royal Mail had been accommodated throughout the roadworks and their staff operate between the hours of 5am and 6pm. The intended road closures were to be between 7pm and 5am. Throughout the duration of the roadworks, the businesses on Westgate had not had any support from the Council.

In response, Councillor Taylor stated that there had been a substantial consultation before the project and during the project and that feedback from that process had been considered. For example, there had been a retention of parking spaces, proposed changes to the roadway system were not implemented and the pavement material had been improved and extended. Benches and planters had also been included. These changes were all as a direct result of the feedback that had been received.

It was recognised that the construction phase had caused disruption, but Councillor Taylor was pleased to inform Mr Hussain that the construction-

related activities were now very nearly complete. Final surfacing was planned for the end of June, which will be the final task before completion. Businesses were being updated on progress on a rolling basis

5. From Mr M. Y. Ashraf:

This Council has been repeatedly asked to repeal the contentious IHRA definition of antisemitism, which has been contested by 104 civil society organisations due to the danger it poses to freedoms of speech. Will this Council pass a motion to repeal this controversial definition?

The Leader thanked Mr Ashraf for his question and confirmed that the Council were not considering passing a motion at the moment. It had been one of the asks that had been put to the Council as part of the petition submitted in February 2024 and that was now being considered by the Council's scrutiny members. There was no intention at the minute to withdraw support for that particular definition. The Leader also stated that Mr Ashraf had commented that people had asked for the definition to be withdrawn. The Leader explained that the people had also asked for it to be introduced. It was the mainstream definition that was used by the British Government and by mainstream political parties. It was accepted that this was not without its critics but, at a time when the Jewish community in Rotherham and across the rest of the country were feeling under fire, it made sense to remain consistent, remain in the mainstream with a definition that worked. The Leader was not aware of any instances where that had prevented people from expressing legitimate views.

In his supplementary, Mr Ashraf stated that there had been persecution at Sitwell School. In the meetings with OSMB regarding the petition, Mr Ashraf stated that it became apparent that there was a difference between the legal advice being given to the Council and the true capacity of the Council to take certain steps within the boundaries of the law. The campaign group had been repeatedly given the blanket statement of "it is illegal" in regard to taking certain actions, even though there was case law and a precedent which would suggest that Councils were able to take certain steps, even if they are purely symbolic. Mr Ashraf stated that as a resident of Rotherham, it was important that the Council was transparent with local communities about what actions it would and would not take with legitimate reasons to explain why. Mr Ashraf asked the Leader and Cabinet to investigate the concerning discrepancy so that residents were not simply given a blanket statement of "it is illegal" when asking the Council to take certain steps?

The Leader stated that he was happy to receive any representations regarding the concerns raised by Mr Ashraf. In relation to the petition, there would be a report from the working group to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and that would be considered in public with the opportunity for further scrutiny and questions. It would then proceed to Cabinet. This would all be a very public process before a final decision was reached.

6. From Ms Wendy Bader:

At one of the previous Council meetings, the leader and members of this Cabinet - such as Councillor Alam - expressed deep sympathies for the Palestinian people and the work that the residents of Rotherham have been doing to express solidarity with the Palestinian people. To support local efforts, will this council pass a motion to raise the Palestinian flag?"

In response to the question, the Leader explained that there was no motion to that effect for the Council to consider at the moment, but that particular ask was part of the petition. OSMB members would be expressing views about whether that would be an appropriate thing for the Council to do as part of their work on the petition.

In her supplementary, Ms Bader explained that the Palestinian petition, that had received over 4000 signatures from Rotherham residents had been discussed with community member and the OSMB. OSMB had created a list of recommendations based on the petition. Ms Bader stated that at the previous full Council meeting, the Leader promised to take action to ensure that the demand of the community petition were dealt with as expediently as possible. The question was therefore, would the Leader and the Cabinet commit to addressing the OSMB recommendation from 5 June meeting at the next full Council meeting?

The Leader explained that, as a matter of process, it would not be for full Council to receive those recommendations at the next meeting. It was for Cabinet Members to receive those and act within the agreed timetable. That would be done as quickly as possible. The Scrutiny meeting had not yet taken place, so the Leader did not know for certain what the recommendations were.

7. From Ms Aiysha Rahim:

Residents have written to the Council and Cllr Yasseen about safeguarding risks and increased crime in the Moorgate due to Carlton Park Hotel and we have received no response. Residents asked Cllr Yasseen to organise a community meeting and we have been told that no Council Officer is going to be in attendance to provide information. Please tell us why?

In response to the question, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion & Neighbourhood Working explained that the Council took these matters very seriously and encouraged residents to report any incidents to the Police or the Council's community protection team. He reassured ward members and residents that officers were working hard collectively to try and resolve the concerns raised.

With regards to Monday night's meeting, the Council had processes in place to support ward councillors who organise public meetings.

Unfortunately in this instance no council staff were available to attend at short notice and the Councillor preferred to proceed with the advertised date and time rather than reschedule. Officers were looking to discuss the ongoing response with all locally elected members prior to engaging more widely with the community.

In her supplementary, Ms Rahim explained that she was a mother of four children and lived in very close proximity to the Carlton Park Hotel. She attended the meeting on Monday evening. For the first time in all the years that she had lived in her house, Ms Rahim was terrified for the safety of her family due to the incidents she had witnessed and what other people had witnessed. She stated that it was shameful that nobody in the Council Chamber, apart from Councillor Yasseen and another Councillor from a different ward, had attended the meeting. Ms Rahim stated that there was enough notice for that meeting for 130 residents to give up three hours on a Monday evening to attend. A number of those residents were present at the Council meeting. There had been violent crime, burglaries, trespassing on private property, prostitution, sex in public, urinating in public, begging, open drug use. These were just some of the things that were raised at the meeting. Ms Rahim stated that she was present at the Council Meeting because no one had had the courage to come to the Monday meeting and listen to the residents. Residents had raised issues and concerns with the MP and Leader going back 12 months. An email had been sent in April 2024 to Council Officers, Members, the Leader etc and no response had been received.

Ms Rahim stated that the borough was supposed to be a child-friendly borough and the Council had said that the safeguarding of children in Rotherham was one of its highest priorities. Ms Rahim wanted to know, as a resident who was very concerned about what was happening in the area and as somebody who had seen the changes since, for whatever reason, the Council chose to house these people in Carlton Park Hotel, as somebody who had children that were terrified, why neither residents nor the local schools, the nursery, the college, the hospital, local Members, were consulted before the decision was taken to house people in Carlton Park Hotel?

Councillor Sheppard thanked Ms Rahim for her question and referred her to his earlier response regarding the short notice of the meeting. He did give assurances that in future, with the right notice, he as Cabinet Member and officers would attend public meetings with the residents to address any ongoing problems. The homelessness team were very much aware of the issues that were ongoing and were working proactively, both with the management of the hotel and the individuals concerned.

8. From Mr John Strawinski:

Council Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy says they will end use of hotels. What plans and timescales can we expect?

Mr Strawinski was unable to attend the meeting and a written response would be provided.

9. From Mrs Elizabeth Strawinski:

Why has it taken this action to raise the profile of this matter - what steps were in place to monitor the effect of the current situation on the local community and what actions were identified and in progress?

Mrs Strawinski was unable to attend the meeting and a written response would be provided.

10. From Mrs Michele Whyley Skellum:

What assurance will we have that this issue will be prioritised and a multi - agency plan of action implemented?

Mrs Skellum was unable to attend the meeting and a written response would be provided.

11. From Mr Martin Skellum:

Have Rotherham Council failed its duty of care to individuals they have placed in The Carlton Park Hotel with no apparent social support or supervision. Not just these individuals but the community in general. With no consultation whatsoever they placed people with severe social problems between a School and a College endangering the children and young people that attend there.

Mr Skellum was unable to attend the meeting and a written response would be provided.

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

16. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Resolved: That in accordance with the requirements detailed in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Councillor Read be appointed as Executive Leader of the Council for the period 2024-2028.

Mover: Councillor Sheppard Seconder: Councillor Monk

17. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader started his statement by thanking his colleagues for their support as the new four year term of office started. He stated that the

Council was a team with the Opposition being part of that team, providing the challenge that was needed. The Leader believed the Council was on the right track.

The Leader congratulated the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their recent appointments. He also offered his congratulations to all new Members of the Council, from all parties and all parts of the borough. There were 21 new Councillors and a further 3 who were returning after a period away. The Leader stated that anyone who stood for election, whatever their views or party, had put their head above the parapet and that should be respected. In an age where politicians of all stripes were reviled and open to abuse, their commitment to public service should be respected along with the personal sacrifices that everyone in the room had made. The Leader stated that this was more important than ever because some candidates had accepted, if not actively encouraged, campaigns and personal slurs against their opponents and those had gone well beyond the usual boundaries of robust democratic debate, factual claims and political differences. The Leader stated that must stop now, before the well of democratic engagement was poisoned irreconcilably and before someone was hurt in Rotherham in the way they were in Sheffield and other parts of the country during the campaign.

The Leader said that competitive elections were a good thing. All Members were only there because the public chose to send them, and Members had to continue to earn their trust. The Leader welcomed the fact that the Labour Group was elected on a clear mandate based on the detailed plans set out.

The Leader explained that these were increasingly difficult and dark times for Councils everywhere. More and more teetered on the brink of financial disaster, a risk that the Council had been desperate to avoid. The number of children in poverty continued to rise, homelessness was higher in the UK than in any comparable western country. Waits in the health service were longer than they had been for a long time. The Leader also reported that in the news on the day of the meeting, the Police were being advised to make fewer arrests due to prisons overflowing. The consequence of those things landed more heavily on the Council Member's shoulders than they did for any official in Whitehall or Minister in Parliament because this was the Council Member's community. The role of Members had to be to continue to secure a home that residents could be proud of and a platform on which they could stand and fulfil their ambitions.

The Leader then confirmed his Cabinet as follows:

- Leader – Councillor Read
- Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working – Councillor Sheppard
- Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health – Councillor Baker-Rogers
- Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor

Cusworth
- Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities – Councillor Alam
- Cabinet Member for Housing – Councillor Allen
- Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy – Councillor Taylor

The Leader stated that by working together right across the Chamber, they would fulfil their commitments to invest in roads and public spaces, the high streets and communities, to build a more inclusive economy where one and a half thousand people would be helped back into work or training and build hundreds more warm, safe and affordable council homes. They would crack down on litter and flytipping and give each child in Rotherham the best possible start in life, including through the baby packs programme.

In concluding his statement, the Leader stated that, before the politics began and the casework overloaded Members inboxes and social media bile poured in, it was important for Members to take a moment and remember that they made it to represent their community and that was a remarkable thing that they were doing.

The following questions were asked by Members and answered by the Leader:

1. Councillor Z Collingham asked the Leader to join him in an expression of thanks to the Returning Officer and to the Electoral Services and wider team who put in long hours in the local election to make it happen and to make it happen very well? Councillor Z Collingham also stated that the results of the election contained many examples of people putting their trust in those who were deeply rooted in their communities, including an increased number of independents. He asked the Leader if he would, given there were perhaps a few people in his group who did not expect to get elected or had intended to retire, give Member some reassurance that the majority group, being tasked as it was with governance of the realm, would be stable, engaged and active in the four years ahead?

   The Leader responded by giving his enormous thanks to all the people that worked on the election, including the significant number of people from outside the Council. His thanks went to all the people involved as none of the Members could be in the Council Chamber legitimately without that work. In response to the second question, the Leader stated that there where a number of people around the room who knew what it was like to be elected without necessarily expecting that in advance and the consequences of that over the period subsequent. The Leader committed to providing stable, engaged and active leadership.

2. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester echoed Councillor Z Collingham's comments regarding the running of the election, but specifically referenced the issue of information regarding the Voter ID that was required, and he stated that the team did a good job with the resources they had. However, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester stated that he came across people who were not turned away from polling stations but were not going to go and vote in the first place because they believed that they did not have the correct ID. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester said they had seen what the underclass could be like when it was concentrated, for example with the queues outside pawnbrokers, but this was something that was not seen. He asked the Leader if he would be willing to lobby the Local Government Association for a proper investigation into the number of people that had basically list the right to vote? Councillor Bennett-Sylvester felt that many more people would have lost the right to vote than had ever been prosecuted for electoral fraud. He also asked the Leader to press the case for the reversal of the voter suppression methods that had been introduced over the past years, such as Voter ID and individual registration?

   In response to Councillor Bennett-Sylvester, the Leader stated that it was a very interesting idea. The LGA position on voter identification had been quite strong but the Leader stated that they would be willing to undertake some lobbying on that account and see what can be done. If a new Government was elected in the coming months, there would be an opportunity to review that legislation.

3. Councillor Reynolds also thanked those involved for the running of a successful election. He then addressed the Leader and stated that Rotherham did not consult, it presented. What that meant was that it does a presentation and said this is what you are getting and from then on, it is a done deal. There was no consultation where opinions were actually sought, and views taken on board before the decisions were made. Councillor Reynolds asked why a question from a member of the public had not been answered earlier in the meeting when good people had turned up in bad weather to ask the question and they were dismissed by the Mayor as "you've had your answer" and they had not, and they feel cheated and short-changed because the question had not been answered. Councillor Reynolds stated that this was an important point. He asked the Leader if in future he would answer the questions as they were asked?

   In response to Councillor Reynolds, the Leader stated that he fundamentally disagreed with the proposition in the way he had set it out in terms of consultation. The Leader explained that he had personally spent hours and days in playing fields and sports halls and Council buildings talking to the public and engaging with them

in open ended conversations. The Leader stated the Council absolutely took the feedback on board. It was natural that a stronger and more pronounced response would be provided when there was a specific proposal on the table for people to look at and take a view on whether that was the right thing or the wrong thing. However, in providing leadership, there was a responsibility to put those things on table in the first place and that would continue. The Leader stated that he heard the concerns from residents earlier and that would be taken on board going forward and they did want to ease the problems that the community was facing. Members would always try to answer questions as best as they possibly could but there was a responsibility in leadership to bring forward proposals to make decisions and to make those decision in the best way possible.

18. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING

Resolved: That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 18 March 2024 be received.

Mover: Councillor Read Seconder: Councillor Sheppard

19. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER - BOROUGH ELECTION RESULTS

Consideration was given to the report submitted by the Returning Officer which detailed the results of the Borough Council Elections that took place on Thursday 2 May 2024.

In moving the report Councillor Alam noted his thanks to the Returning Officer, the Elections Team and all of the staff who had ensured the smooth running of the election process. In seconding the report, Councillor Sheppard echoed Councillor Alam's comments and noted the incredible logistical achievement that had been undertaken by the electoral services team.

Resolved: - That the report be noted.

Mover:- Councillor Alam Seconder:- Councillor Sheppard

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

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the membership of Political Groups on the Council, the political balance and the entitlement to seats on, and the proposed appointments to Committees, Boards and Panels.

It was noted that Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 placed a duty on local authorities to set out the principles to be

followed when allocating seats to political groups and for these principles to be followed when determining such allocation following formal notification of the establishment of political groups in operation on the Council. It was noted further that there was a requirement on local authorities to annually review the entitlement of the political groups to seats on the committees of the council.

The report stated that the allocation of seats must follow 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.

The report stated that there were three political groups in operation on the Council:

Labour
Leader – Councillor Read
Deputy Leader – Councillor Sheppard
(33 Members)

Conservative
Leader – Councillor Z Collingham
Deputy Leader – Councillor Bacon
(13 Members)

Liberal Democrat
Leader – Councillor Adam Carter
(3 Members)

It was noted that there were 144 seats available on Committees, Boards and Panels, and under the calculations, the following were entitled to:

Political Group	Seat Entitlement
Labour	81
Conservative	32
Liberal Democrat	7
Non-Aligned	24
Total	144

Resolved:

1. That the entitlement of the membership of Council be agreed and such entitlements be reflected in Council's appointments of members to committees (as per the table at 3.2 and 4.2).

2. That approval be given to the appointment of Members to committees, boards and panels, and the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs, as detailed in the Mayor's Letter:

Cabinet – 7L
Leader – Councillor Read
Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working – Councillor Sheppard
Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health – Councillor Baker-Rogers
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor Cusworth
Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities – Councillor Alam
Cabinet Member for Housing – Councillor Allen
Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy – Councillor Taylor

Audit Committee - 3L, 1C, 1N-A
Councillor Marshall (Chair)
Councillor Baggaley (Vice Chair)
Councillor McKiernan

Councillor Blackham

Councillor Elliott

Licensing Board – 12L, 5C, 1LD, 3N-A
Councillor Hughes (Chair)
Councillor Beresford (Vice Chair)
Councillor Adair
Councillor Brent
Councillor Foster
Councillor Garnett
Councillor Harper
Councillor Lelliott
Councillor Monk
Councillor Pitchley
Councillor Steele
Councillor Sutton

Councillor Bacon
Councillor Collingham. T
Councillor Collingham. Z
Councillor Reynolds
Councillor Stables

Liberal Democrat Group - Vacancy

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester
Councillor Bower

Councillor Jones

Licensing Committee – 8L, 3C, 1LD & 3N-A
Councillor Hughes (Chair)
Councillor Beresford (Vice Chair)

Councillor Garnett
Councillor Harper
Councillor Lelliott
Councillor Monk
Councillor Pitchley
Councillor Steele

Councillor Bacon
Councillor Collingham. T
Councillor Stables

Liberal Democrat Group - Vacancy

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester
Councillor Bower
Councillor Jones

Planning Board – 8L, 3C, 1LD, 3N-A
Councillor Williams (Chair)
Councillor Mault (Vice Chair)
Councillor Adair
Councillor Ahmed
Councillor Baker-Rogers
Councillor Cowen
Councillor Keenan
Councillor Knight

Councillor Castledine-Dack
Councillor Fisher
Councillor Thorp

Councillor Tarmey

Councillor Currie
Councillor Elliott
Councillor Hussain

Staffing Committee – 3L, 1C, 1NA
Councillor Alam (Chair)
Councillor Read (Vice Chair)
1 x appropriate Cabinet Member as determined by the matter to be considered

Councillor Collingham. Z

Councillor Jones

Standards and Ethics Committee – 5L, 2C, 1NA
Councillor Monk (Chair)
Councillor Clarke (Vice Chair)
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Keenan

Councillor Collingham. T
Councillor Hall

Councillor Beck

Parish Councillor Alan Buckley
Parish Councillor Monica Carroll
Parish Council Representative Vacancy

Independent Members:
Mrs. Adela Bingham
Ms. Kate Penney
Mr. Peter Edler
Vacancy x 2

Independent Persons:
Mr. Phil Beavers
Mr. David Roper-Newman

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 7L, 3C, 1LD, 1NA
Councillor Steele (Chair)
Councillor Bacon (Vice Chair)
Councillor Baggaley
Councillor Keenan
Councillor Knight
Councillor Marshall
Councillor McKiernan
Councillor Pitchley

Councillor Blackham
Councillor Tinsley

Councillor Carter. A
Councillor Yasseen

Health Select Commission – 10L, 4C, 1LD, 3NA
Councillor Keenan (Chair)
Councillor Yasseen (Vice Chair)

Councillor Clarke
Councillor Duncan
Councillor Garnett
Councillor Haleem
Councillor Lelliott
Councillor Rashid

Labour Group - Vacancy
Labour Group - Vacancy
Labour Group - Vacancy

Councillor Baum-Dixon
Councillor Hall
Councillor Reynolds
Councillor Thorp

Councillor Tarmey

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester
Councillor Havard

Improving Lives Select Commission – 10L, 4C, 1LD, 3NA
Councillor Pitchley (Chair)
Councillor Knight (Vice Chair)
Councillor Baggaley
Councillor Brent
Councillor Foster
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Monk
Councillor Sutton
Labour Group - Vacancy

Councillor Blackham
Councillor Collingham. T
Councillor Fisher
Councillor Reynolds

Liberal Democrat Group - Vacancy

Councillor Bower
Councillor Elliott
Councillor Ryalls

Improving Places Select Commission – 10L, 4C, 1LD, 3NA
Councillor McKiernan (Chair)
Councillor Tinsley (Vice Chair)
Councillor Adair

Councillor Ahmed
Councillor Baggaley
Councillor Beresford
Councillor Cowen
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Mault
Councillor Rashid
Councillor Williams

Councillor Castledine-Dack
Councillor Stables
Councillor Thorp

Councillor Carter. C

Councillor Beck
Councillor Havard
Councillor Jones

Introductory Tenancy Review Panel – 2L 1C, 1NA
Chair and Vice Chair to be drawn from members of the Improving Lives Scrutiny Commission or Improving Places Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Sutton
Councillor Jackson

Councillor Tinsley

Councillor Ryalls

Joint Consultative Committee – 3L, 1C, 1NA
Councillor Alam (Chair) - L
Councillor Sheppard (Vice Chair) - L

Councillor Steele x L

Councillor Collingham. Z

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester

Health and Wellbeing Board – 2L
Councillor Baker-Rogers (Chair)
Councillor Cusworth

3. That approval be given to the appointment of Members to joint committees, as detailed in the Mayor's Letter:

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Board 1L
Councillor Read

Councillor Sheppard (Sub L)

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Board Rotational Member 1L
Councillor Taylor

Sheffield City Region Audit, Standards and Risk Committee 1L
Councillor Marshall
Councillor Baggaley - Substitute

Sheffield City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1L, 1C
Councillor Steele
Councillor McKiernan - Substitute

Councillor Bacon
Councillor Baum-Dixon - Substitute

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority 2L
Councillor McKiernan
Councillor Knight

South Yorkshire Pension Authority – RMBC Vice-Chair for 24/25 1L & 1C
Councillor Sutton (s41 responsibilities)
Councillor Fisher

South Yorkshire Pension Board –1L
Councillor Beresford

South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner 1L, 1C
Councillor Harper
Councillor Baum-Dixon

Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation Joint Committee 1L
Councillor Baker-Rogers
Labour Group – Vacancy (Substitute)

Mover: Councillor Read Seconder: Councillor Sheppard

21. AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

Mover: Councillor Marshall Seconder: Councillor Baker-Rogers

22. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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

Mover: Councillor Baker-Rogers Seconder: Councillor Cusworth

23. 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 Hughes Seconder: Councillor Beresford

24. PLANNING BOARD

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

Mover: Councillor Williams Seconder: Councillor Mault

25. STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

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

Mover: Councillor Monk Seconder: Councillor Clarke

26. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

There were no questions to consider.

27. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

31 questions had been submitted:

1. Councillor Bacon asked: Can the Leader of the Council confirm which council cabinet member had overall responsibility for the Towns and Villages fund, its timetable, and general oversight during the 2021/24 term?

   Councillor Allen responded and explained that she was providing the response as she had been the Cabinet Member with overall responsibility for the Towns and Villages Fund. She explained that the question had been answered by officers a number of weeks ago and the answer had not changed since then. The answer had been that the Cabinet report of January 2022 identified responsibility for the programme as being with the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy with input from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood

Working. From 2023, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working took responsibility for the programme, once it was clear that the programme of work was focused on delivery schemes for neighbourhoods. Councillor Allen confirmed that the Towns and Villages Project for her and Councillor Bacon's ward of Aston and Todwick had been included on the agenda for their first ward meeting. Appropriate officers had been invited.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Bacon explained that he had wanted his question to be answered by the Leader of the Council and, going forward, he believed that members of the leading group should be respectful of who members of the opposition want to answer their question. He did thank Councillor Allen for this response which he stated confirmed what was known to be true. In light of this, Councillor Bacon asked why the Labour Party Group had spread misinformation to the contrary, during the local elections in Aston and Todwick. He asked that, given that a current Labour Councillor who was in the Chamber had admitted to him that the Labour leaflets on this during the election were quote "distant from the truth," would the Leader of the Council and Leader of the Labour Group now ensure that his group apologises to the people of Aston and Todwick for spreading this misinformation which eroded trust in democracy, was a disgrace and went back to what was said earlier in the meeting about truths in elections? Would the Leader apologies?

Councillor Allen confirmed that she and Councillor Bacon had talked at the election count and had discussed the leaflets that had been distributed. What had not been discussed were the untruths that were in the documents distributed by the Conservative MP. Councillor Allen stated that she personally objected to being called bizarre but had not made an issue of it as, for her, that was part of the political campaign process.

2. Councillor Ball: What would be the impact to local schools if Labour's proposals to remove VAT relief to independent schools was put in place?

   As Councillor Ball was not present to ask his question, a written response would be provided.

3. Councillor Yasseen: Does the Leader of the Council share my view that the proposed plans to build houses on Herringthorpe Playing Fields, a much loved and cherished recreational green space, should be withdrawn given the widespread rejection by Rotherham residents and me as the long-standing ward Councillor?

   The Leader started by saying the no one was proposing to build house on Herringthorpe Playing Fields. There was a proposal to build council homes on a site adjacent to Herringthorpe Playing Fields. That side had previously been built on and the rubble from the building that was

recently demolished on that site was still visible. The site was allocated for housing in the Local Plan which was agreed through the Chamber and Councillor Yasseen had the opportunity to take part in that process. The Leader understood some of the concerns that had been expressed by residents and agreed that they should be working together to try and find a solution that was acceptable. Access to the playing fields through the site was an important part of that.

The Leader also stated that when there were people coming to the Chamber because of the homelessness pressures in the borough being so great that the Council was struggling for hotel places, let alone temporary accommodation, to be actively campaigning against council housing, affordable council housing, was a real worrying question. The Leader stated that he was in favour of building council homes that people needed across the borough in places that were allocated for housing.

In her supplementary, Councillor Yasseen stated that she had fully supported the building of 600 homes by the Council which were mostly in Boston Castle. She stated however that very little of that was going where the issues were in terms of housing. It was not actually for social housing in the way described by the Leader, and this was misinformation. With regards to her support for the Local Plan, Councillor Yasseen explained that she had received lots of legal advice about what could and could not be changed prior to her becoming a Councillor for Boston Castle. She had been told that nothing could be changed in the Local Plan. In her tenure as a Councillor, there had never been a proposal to trigger the right to build on the site in question. Councillor Yasseen was holding a sign that said “Save Our Herringthorpe Playing Fields” and she asked the Leader or relevant Cabinet Member to attend a meeting with the Friends of Herringthorpe Playing Fields as they would not allow houses to be built on it.

In his response, the Leader stated that Councillor Yasseen had been a Member of the Council when the Local Plan had been agreed. It had taken a long time to get it agreed. The site had had buildings on previously and, unlike the sign suggested, there were no plans to build on the big grassy areas of Herringthorpe Playing Fields. The Cabinet Member for Housing had already agreed on more than one occasion to attend a meeting with the Friends of Herringthorpe Playing Fields. That did not mean that an agreement would necessarily be reached regarding the proposal.

4. Does the Leader of the Council think that using Carlton Park Hotel in place of adequate social housing without any consultation with or involvement of local residents, Oakwood School, Thomas Rotherham College or me as the ward Councillor, is acceptable given the potential for serious safeguarding risks?

The Leader stated that the Council had a legal and moral obligation to house people who were homeless, especially at a time when homelessness in the country was higher than it had ever been. The Leader was deeply regretful that he lived in a time when there was simply not enough temporary accommodation, including some hotel places elsewhere, to house the number of people who need those services. As Councillor Yasseen knew, the Council had made a commitment to bring to an end rough sleeping in the borough and the Leader confirmed that he took that very seriously. The Leader stated that he did not think it was helpful at a time when each of those people received support as an individual, received an allocated worker, for people to be making comments which could be seen to generalise or stigmatise people who were homeless in the borough. The Leader wished the Council did not have to put people in Carlton Park Hotel and he was hopeful that over the weeks ahead, the situation would be that the numbers reduce or come down to zero altogether. He was absolutely conscientious and aware of the concern and strength of feeling that had been made by the residents but, in the end, the Council also had a moral and legal obligation to those people who needed a roof over their head because the only other alternative was to put them out onto the streets.

In her supplementary, Councillor Yasseen stated that she was not there to debate the Housing Strategy and would stick to what she had seen from residents, business owners, the school and various other representatives. Councillor Yasseen explained that she was taken aback by the response to the public question in which it was explained that the Council did not have enough time to represent itself to explain decisions that had been made to house people, some of them extremely vulnerable, in this way. Councillor Yasseen asked the Leader whether it was appropriate, with two and a half thousand people under the age of 18 nearby? She had received one email, then more emails, then had attended the meeting on Monday with over 130 residents. Councillor Yasseen stated that community, responding and being accountable was at the heart of the Neighbourhood Strategy and therefore trust should be built with residents. She asked the Leader whether it would have been a good decision to send officers to the meeting to represent how decisions got made and the situation could be moved forward. Councillor Yasseen stated that everyone got the same amount of notice. It was an emergency, and the Leader did not class it as one.

The Leader stated that he had nothing to add to what was stated earlier. Advice had been provided regarding the best way of ensuring that officers be able to attend the meeting. There was no problem in principle with officers speaking to a group of residents at a meeting and the Leader was happy to ensure that that would happen if further discussions needed to take place. If the request to attend the meeting had been received a week prior, there would have been no issue but that is not what happened.

5. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: Would you please give an update on the building of a new café at Thrybergh Country Park with an estimated opening date?

   Councillor Sheppard explained that what had been seen at Thrybergh and Rother Valley as the tendering process was being completed were the same sorts of cost pressures affecting the schemes right across the country. Since the Levelling Up Funds were allocated, construction prices had risen sharply, way beyond the inflation rates broadcast, and continued to do so. The Council were currently looking at what could be done to best deliver on the kinds of schemes that were agreed to and would engage with Councillor Bennett-Sylvester as soon as possible on what that looks like.

   In his supplementary question, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester stated that there had been some discussions and frustration regarding the scaling back of places at Thrybergh Country Park, especially regarding the loss of the new car park and new pedestrian access. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked Councillor Sheppard for his word that with the café, there would be no scaling back on the quality as the potential of a commercial unit was something that would really help the park and also help the borough wider.

   Councillor Sheppard stated that he could not make commitments whilst the tendering process was still underway. What he could confirm was that work was underway with the next two phases for the pathways around the park from the Council budget. The Council would continue to do their best for Thrybergh Country Park and all the other parks across the borough to ensure they have the facilities that make it a pleasant day out for families to enjoy.

6. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: Can you please advise members on the situation regards the redevelopment of 3-7 Corporation Street and your proposed next steps in renewing the site?

   Councillor Taylor explained that 3-7 Corporation Street was now in Council ownership and the demolition and clearance work was now on site. The blight on the town centre would soon be cleared.

   In his supplementary question, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester stated that the plan was for this to be a mixed use development with residential and retail. He was concerned that some of the plans for town centre living were still too small in scale and often achieved by quite large incentive towards developers. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked whether or not part of the problem was that an uneven market had been created regarding residential properties within the town by releasing too much greenfield land where developers would sooner develop rather than go to the town centre. Was this something that was being considered and was there an imbalance in the market

regarding where the Council could and could not attract developers?

Councillor Taylor explained that he had only been in his post as Cabinet Member for a couple of days and as such could not provide detail on that question. He did confirm that a tendering exercise had taken place and contractors were being looked into, but no contract had been agreed as yet. What the Council did want to do was compliment the building of the Forge Island complex and create a positive environment.

7. Councillor Yasseen: As an Independent Councillor for Boston Castle, I prioritise ensuring the Council genuinely consults and involves residents and businesses in decisions affecting our communities. Are you willing to support this approach, or do you prefer maintaining the current superficial engagement?

   Councillor Sheppard stated that he believed, from his experience within his ward and within his role as a Cabinet Member, that the Council did genuinely consult and involve residents, partners and businesses wherever they could to get better results.

   Councillor Yasseen stated that she had been so concerned over the last couple of years about the lack of community consultation. Examples included the bicycle lanes in Boston Castle which were imposed as a route, issues concerning the cemeteries and Carlton Park Hotel. Councillor Yasseen stated that these had been done without appropriate consultation or responding to what local people were saying. She stated that she was so concerned that she asked OSMB to do a spotlight review and there were a number of recommendations within that report. Councillor Yasseen asked how the report and its findings, which reflected her concerns and the concerns of some of the residents that had attended the Council meeting, would be brought forward as there were concerns about the lack of involvement and community consultation on the very issues that had a detrimental impact on their lives.

   Councillor Sheppard stated that he could not prejudge what OSMB would say but confirmed that he would respond when the recommendations came through. Councillor Sheppard stated that he was committed to working with residents to move forward and ensure everyone was kept informed. It was important to make sure that everyone understood the issues and hopefully support schemes moving forward.

8. Councillor Tinsley: Now planning has been granted on land near Highfield Park Maltby. Has the Council entered into any conversations about potentially buying properties, for Council Homes?

   Councillor Allen explained that the Planning Application for Land at the North of Tickhill Road (Highfield Park) was for Outline Planning

permission only. The application was subject to a further 'reserved matters' application which would determine the final number of homes and in turn the number of Affordable Homes to be delivered on the site. Once the numbers were confirmed, the Council, along with other Registered Providers (RPs) would have an opportunity to bid for the Affordable Housing provision on the site.

In his supplementary Councillor Tinsley stated there were some environmental concerns regarding the land at and around Highfield Park. However, his supplementary question related to Council Housing. He stated that Doncaster Council were buying existing housing stock and asked if that was an avenue Rotherham Council would explore to increase Council Housing within the borough?

Councillor Allen explained the Acquisitions Policy allowed the Council to look at purchasing homes from developers across the borough, so yes.

9. Councillor Tinsley: Can the Leader update the Council over any actions taken since the motion on Little London Maltby were heard?

   The Leader explained that a number of actions were underway including the removal of the accumulation of waste and the mound to the front of the properties and over half of the privately rented properties had now been inspected and improvements carried out by the Landlords to address areas identified as requiring action. A survey of residents to identify key crime and community safety concerns had also been completed.

   In terms of purchasing the derelict buildings or potentially purchasing the derelict buildings, the Leader explained that, as part of the correct legal procedure, the Council had been out to tender for some consultants to help set out an options appraisal to be in place. It was being finalised as to who that would be and there would be further engagement with residents and ward members subsequently as part of the process.

10. Councillor Tinsley: Does the Council create a substance called CLO (compost like output) at the shared household residual waste facility?

    Councillor Alam explained that the Council had produced different variants of compost like products from different streams and contracts. The garden waste went to a facility in Bradford for windrowing, where it was treated over 10-12 weeks and then went to the farming market as compost. The organic waste from the Pink Lidded Bins, went through Manvers and was used for land restoration after being mixed and treated in the Anaerobic Digestion part of the facility. The non-organic materials were sent to Ferrybridge.

    In his supplementary, Councillor Tinsley raised concerns regarding the

biomass which went toward reclamation. In Maltby, the compost like material had toothbrushes in it amongst other things and it was not a well regulated material by the Environment Agency. He asked the Cabinet Member if he would be open to visiting the facility?

Councillor Alam confirmed he would be open to visiting the facility.

11. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: Over the past 3 weeks Dalton Parish Council have been struggling to access legal advice with regards to a Traveller camp on Magna Park. Can you please review the possibility of parish councils being able to purchase legal services from RMBC to help assist with such instances?

    Councillor Alam stated that it was understood that the unauthorised encampment was on private land and therefore the Parish Council were advised to seek independent legal advice. He confirmed that he would ask Legal Services to contact the Parish in relation to options for purchasing legal advice. There were a range of options that could be suggested including joining a framework which maybe more financially beneficial.

    In his supplementary, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester paid tribute to the clerks at Dalton Parish Council, Mrs Holsey and Mrs Chico, for the work they had done over the past few weeks and Council Officers, Richard Bramhall and Neil Archer who had done all they could within their powers. Thanks was also given to Inspector Fretwell. Addressing Councillor Alam, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester stated that the difficulties faced by those named had been enormous. The Parish Council was small and poorly financed and did not have the same powers as big private businesses or the Council. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked that a wider discussion take place, probably with the Deputy Leader, Neighbourhoods and Parish Councils to make sure everyone was aware of what they could and could not do and to make sure the maximum resources were used to help in difficult situations.

12. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: Can we get this out of the way ahead of the service review. Can you please state absolutely that all council tenants will have the choice not to have Rothercare if they do not feel they require it?

    Councillor Baker-Rogers explained that the Labour Group set out in their manifesto a commitment to a new programme of assistive technologies to enable people to live in their home for longer, and that residents who did not use the Rothercare system in their own home will no longer have to pay for it. Proposals to implement that commitment would be brought forward to Cabinet later in 2024.

13. Councillor Currie: Thank you to the positive response to my supplementary question on Automated Road crossing and the review of the criteria ,please could I ask formally for Roughwood and

Rescope schools to be reconsidered for an automated crossing in light of this review?

Councillor Taylor was pleased to inform the Chamber that the assessment criteria for pedestrian crossings had recently been revised to better address the needs and safety of all road users. These updated criteria were designed to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of pedestrian crossing requests, considering factors such as traffic volume, pedestrian footfall, nearby amenities, and overall safety. In light of these revisions, Cabinet and Officers were happy to take requests under consideration – but of course there is a finite budget and many requests.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Currie asked that when the Forward Plan and the Place-Based Investment Plan were next to be reviewed, could all schools, without existing crossings, in super output areas, with an index of multiple deprivation, automatically be assessed for road crossings, irrespective of whether there was a school crossing patrol? Then, after all those schools had been assessed, move on to the other schools outside these areas of Indices of Multiple Deprivation?

Councillor Taylor confirmed that all considerations would be taken into account.

14. Councillor Currie: Please could you tell me the budget allocation to 20mph zoning in Rotherham?

Councillor Taylor explained that there was no specific budget allocated for the implementation of 20mph zones within the Council's Transportation Capital Programme. However, through the Local Neighbourhood and Road Safety scheme programme, a number of Members had put forward such schemes for implementation and he advised Councillor Currie to do the same.

In his supplementary, Councillor Currie asked if some of the £4.6 million Levelling Up Fund money that had been gifted to the improvements of the stables at Wentworth Woodhouse, be used to invest in the infrastructure that improves everyday life around the estate. This included 20 mile per hour zoning at schools, traffic debottlenecking at the junction of Brook Hill, Upper Wortley Road and Lodge Lane, and the traffic flow through Thorpe Hesley at Thorpe Street and Wentworth Road to make traffic safer and more accessible to local residents? This was so that when all the extra welcome visitors to Wentworth Woodhouse arrived, all the issues would have been addressed and implemented.

Councillor Taylor explained that the money had already been designated for a specific purpose and therefore it would not be reallocated. In future, bids would be invited for various pots of money

for road safety schemes and Councillor Taylor encouraged Councillor Currie to apply for those and make representations to the relevant departments.

15. Councillor C Carter: Parking improvements outside Brinsworth shops were due to be completed before Easter. What is the cause of the delay and when will works be completed?

    Councillor Sheppard explained that the scheme at Brinsworth had been the most complex project within the Towns and Villages Fund, dealing with seven different landowners in order to deliver the project. Legal agreements were completed on 9 February 2024, after nearly 18 months of negotiations with landowners.

    Since that time, two routes to market had been explored, with a contractor appointed to deliver the scheme. As the first route to market was not successful, a second route was utilised which extended the tender process, delaying the delivery of the scheme by approximately six weeks. However, an initial meeting had now taken place with the contractor, and it was anticipated that works will begin in June 2024.

    Ward Councillors had been involved closely with the project and had received regular updates regarding the complexity of the scheme through Ward Briefings, which would continue until the project was completed.

    Councillor C Carter explained that the changes were long awaited by residents and were being looked forward to. She explained that they did feel let down as they had acted in good faith in communicating the plans with residents that had been confirmed but not adhered to. Councillor C Carter also stated that there had been very little communication and updates from Council Officers. She asked for reassurance that Ward Councillors would be kept informed of any further progress and changes as that progressed over the next month?

    Councillor Sheppard agreed and stated that Officers would continue to liaise and keep Ward Councillors informed.

16. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: Please take us through the reasons for reducing the number of roads members can nominate for resurfacing in their wards from three to one?

    Councillor Taylor explained that the new Capital investment by the Council of £16.8m over four years, to maintain the improvement in the condition of the Unclassified (estate roads) Network and repair footways, would again allow all Councillors to nominate a road in their Wards that they would like to be included on this year's Highway Repair Programme.

    This offer was consistent with previous years when the service had

contacted the ward and asked for two or three roads to be nominated. For 2024/25 each Councillor was to be contacted – therefore adding up to the same.

However Members were informed that they should not feel constrained to providing just one road. If improvements were required, Members should contact highways.

In his supplementary, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester stated that one of the problems with any council services was that those who shouted loudest got. He asked if it would be possible to provide information regarding not just Ward level but Super Output Area level, a percentage of roads that could be resurfaced but have been done, just to ensure that all neighbourhoods had equal access and there was no potential bias. Could that information be provided?

Councillor Taylor agreed to provide a written response.

17. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester: Until such time that a solution can be found for the congestion in Dalton can the removal of the bus lane opposite Lidl be considered to increase capacity and ease the choke points at the junctions of Doncaster Road with Oldgate Lane and Magna Lane?

Councillor Taylor explained that bus lanes were an important part of the Council's long-term strategy to reduce dependency on the car. By prioritising public transport it encouraged more residents to use the bus.

The bus lane on the approach to Mushroom Roundabout was a vital component of the x78 strategic bus route providing a reliable service to a large number of commuters daily between Sheffield, Meadowhall, Rotherham and Doncaster. The bus lane ensured that buses could keep to their schedules even at peak times.

Removing dedicated bus lanes, and other similar measures, often lead to induced traffic. This meant that any relief in congestion was typically short-lived, as more drivers chose to use the expanded road, eventually leading to a return of congestion levels or even worse traffic conditions.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester stated that it was all well and good in theory but if the bus was sat for 20 minutes in traffic on Oldgate Lane or further down Doncaster Road for five minutes to access the bus lane, it was not very good. At the moment no solutions had been provided regarding the choke points. There was ever increasing traffic due to developments at Ravenfield, Wickersley and other areas. The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority had looked at a scheme to reduce congestion on the Mushroom Roundabout which unfortunately failed because of the

infrastructure. Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked if, over the next four years, a commitment could be made to specifically look at reducing congestion in the area and to lobbying SYMCA for any potential funds or help as the conditions were getting to a point where the lives of people in Dalton were being severely impacted by congestion?

Councillor Taylor stated that Government policy strongly supported the retention and expansion of bus lanes as part of a broader commitment to sustainable transportation. National guidelines emphasised the importance of reducing car use, cutting emissions, and investing in reliable public transport infrastructure. Removing the bus lane would be contrary to these policies and put at risk the allocation of future funding for such measures. Councillor Taylor also confirmed that he was willing to discuss any ideas put to him in his new role of Cabinet Member.

18. Councillor Z Collingham: Having gained just one seat in the Borough elections, what do the Labour Group plan to change about their offer to the public?

The Leader responded by stating that yes, the Labour Group gained one seat and would have liked to have gained some more but the Conservative Group lost a third of the Members who were elected in 2021 so he would not be taking lesson from the Conservative Group in term of electoral success. A detailed plan had been set out about what the Labour Group wanted to do on behalf of the people of the borough. That was the deal that had been made with the people of the borough and the Labour Group would deliver on those pledge and build that trust as part of the process.

In his supplementary, Councillor Z Collingham stated that the Labour Group would essentially not be changing much about the offer to the public and just carry on with the same. The fact that the Conservative Group were there at all was a testament to their success and to Rotherham Labour's unique failure. He stated that many years ago Labour had 58 seats, that then reduced to 50 and then 34. The Labour Group were struggling to make any movement from that. The Conservative Party was the natural opposition in Rotherham and that was no longer the new normal. There was also an increased number of independents and that said a change to the offer was needed and not everyone was as happy as they used to be. Councillor Z Collingham's question was how could the Leader conclude that Rotherham Labour was not going backwards?

The Leader explained that when he arrived in the Chamber in 2011, there was 12 Conservative Councillors and they had now made it all the way to 13; congratulations on such a huge percentage increase in the amount of seats. The Leader also stated that the amount of money that the Conservative Party was spending in Rother Valley in order to hold on to that seat had to be astronomical and some of the Members

would be aware of how much that was and where that money came from. The Leader stated that he would not read a huge amount into that in terms of the electoral outcome. He was glad that people had put their faith in the Labour Group to continue leading the Council. They would do that to the best of their ability. There would be a General Election later in the year and the Leader would wait to see what the outcome of that would be. In concluding, the Leader stated that he believed that a lot of the Conservative Group's success was as a result of a significant amount of dubious money pouring into the borough and filling their campaign coffers.

19. Councillor Z Collingham: How can a Council that takes three years to introduce simple parking restrictions and makes promises, only to break them, expect to be trusted by residents?

Councillor Taylor explained that it was unfortunately not uncommon for schemes to take longer than expected and for the Council and Councillors to then get blamed. However, implementing parking restriction was a complex process. Waiting restrictions, such as single or double yellow lines, were subject to the processing of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which is the legal framework and process that allows parking restrictions to be legally enforceable. The process of creating a new, or even amending, an existing order was complex. It could take several months to complete an order as they required many stages of public and statutory consultation. If objections to the TRO are received, this can then prolong the process. It also relied upon the government, legal processes, those working in the legal processes etc. Councillor Taylor confirmed that the proposals were taking place as quickly as possible within the set framework.

In his supplementary, Councillor Collingham stated that it was understood that there were process involved but it was not good enough for something like a Traffic Regulation Order, which was a 12 month process, to take three years. In this case, there was full engagement from Ward Members and community and there was no reason why it should take three years other than the internal delivery mechanisms of the Council. Councillor Collingham asked the Cabinet Member if he understood that there had to be a point where it was said, legalities aside, that it has taken too long and that it is not good enough and it needs to be done better? Everything there was poor communication or poor implementation, it just lead more people to think the Council was rubbish and those people stop reporting, stop engaging and stop believing that Council can help them. He asked what Councillor Taylor would do in his role to try and change that and do better?

Before answering the supplementary, it was confirmed that this question was in relation to New Orchard Lane, Thurcroft. Councillor Taylor read out the timeline that had been provided by officers in relation to that scheme: This TRO was raised informally in November

2022, some 18 months ago. Within this timescale, the Council also received a planning application for a local development, which also proposed a number of waiting restrictions.

This added an element of complication as the TRO for the waiting restrictions related to local development received several objections. To take a holistic approach, given the nature of those objections, it was prudent to consider both TROs together given their close proximity. This ultimately added time to the process but a more thorough outcome. On conclusion, all objections were duly considered and reported through the Council's Officer Delegated Decision process.

The date for implementation of the markings on site was given as the 16 May 2024, and coincided with the date on which the Traffic Regulation Order was officially sealed. Information obtained from the lining contractor indicates that markings were installed around the junction of New Orchard Lane and Kingsforth Road on the 16 May 2024. Due to weather conditions, the lining was not able to be completed. The team returned on 20 May and completed all but 5m of lining, owing to the presence of a parked vehicle. The team would continue to complete the remaining 5m as soon as possible.

20. Councillor Ball: What is the current funding gap for this year after having such a low council tax increase last financial year?

    As Councillor Ball was not present to ask his question, a written response would be provided.

21. Councillor Ball: How much interest has this council earned from lending money out to the likes of Birmingham Council and Goldman Sachs over a 14 year period?

    As Councillor Ball was not present to ask his question, a written response would be provided.

22. Councillor A Carter: Given the accidents and speeding traffic on the section of Bawtry Road between Tinsley and Brinsworth Lane, will the council consider again the speed limit on the road, to reduce this to 30mph as residents and I have long called for?

    Councillor Taylor stated that the Council took matters of speeding very seriously in accordance with their statutory Road Safety duty and continually undertook studies into road traffic collisions and took steps to reduce and prevent them. Based on these investigations, and within the resources available, a list of schemes was compiled, with funding directed towards locations that had the potential to produce the greatest reductions in accident severity and casualty numbers. The level of intervention measures across the borough was dependent on the funding allocation from central government.

In the case of Bawtry Road, Brinsworth, a road safety scheme was implemented in 2019. This scheme included the introduction of red central hatching, improved signage and enhancements to pedestrian crossing facilities including a light controlled pedestrian crossing.

Regarding speed limits, these were set in accordance with standards established by the Department for Transport to ensure they were appropriate for the nature of the road.

In his supplementary question, Councillor A Carter stated that that sounded like a no, and he asked the Cabinet Member to confirm that.

Councillor Taylor explained that he would never say no and would always welcome debate and discussion.

Currently, the majority of motorists were traveling at speeds of 38.4 mph or below, which was influenced by the nature of the road, such as its wide layout and properties set back from the highway. To effectively change driver behaviour and reduce speeds, a fundamental redesign of the road would be necessary. This redesign would ensure any reduced speed limit was effective, complied with, and ultimately safer. Due to the significant costs involved, the Council were currently unable to make these alterations. However, they could conduct a review of the road conditions and existing traffic patterns to determine if any feasible improvements could be made.

23. Councillor A Carter: Historically ward capital budgets and community leadership funds can be accessed for the whole 4 year term at the start of the term of office (i.e. 25/26, 26/27, 27/28 funds can be used as soon as needed). Can the cabinet member confirm this is still the case this term?

    Councillor Sheppard explained that ward budgets were approved as part of the Budget and Council Tax Report 2024/25, so the revenue and capital budgets were in place for the next twelve months. Outside of an election year then any underspend on both the Community Leadership Fund (CLF) and the ward capital budgets can be carried forward.

    However 4 years' worth of budget was not available and never had been.

    Councillor A Carter asked, given the difficulties that had been experienced with lots of the Towns and Villages Schemes in getting quite big projects done within a three year period, would it not be sensible to enable ward members and communities to facilitate a bringing forward of funding so that the big schemes could move forward and be delivered in the four year cycle?

Councillor Sheppard explained that there were different schemes that could be utilised for such schemes. The ward capital budgets were for small to medium sized schemes. The larger Towns and Villages fund and its successor would look at bigger projects. It was a case of putting them all together. However, the ward and community budgets had to be set in line with the Council's Budget setting process.

24. Councillor Tarmey: We recently received the request for member input on estate road resurfacing plans. Does the administration have any plans to seek member input into pavement/footway resurfacing as many pavements in Anston and Woodsetts are in very poor condition?

    As Councillor Tarmey was not present to ask his question, a written response would be provided.

25. Councillor Tarmey: Residents in Anston have complained to me about the poor state of play equipment in Greenlands Park. What plans does the administration have to ensure rolling replacement of deteriorating equipment in RMBC owned parks this financial year?

    As Councillor Tarmey was not present to ask his question, a written response would be provided.

26. Councillor A Carter: Almost a year has passed since a resident complained about the lack of consultation on roof repairs on their leasehold property from the council, without any resolution. With a threatened bill of around £10,000 to that resident, does the cabinet member agree with me that this is wrong and should be resolved quickly?

    Councillor Allen asked Councillor Carter to convey her personal apologies to the resident for the regrettable situation. However, this case had taken much longer than anticipated to resolve because specialist external legal advice was required to determine the most appropriate way to proceed on the matter. This information had recently been received and a decision is due to be communicated to residents imminently.

    Councillor A Carter stated that he appreciated the response and looked forward to seeing the decision. He noted that the consultation process to undertake what were significant roof repairs on a house that the Council had the freehold on had been too long and he believed that the legal position was clear, that if they Council had not proceeded correctly, only £250 would be paid.

27. Councillor Jones: In 2023 OSMB agreed that the report to them from officers updating the current situation about Grange Landfill (Droppingwell tip) should be received annually, the last time this was done was February 2023, can you explain why there has been no update at OSMB this year?

Councillor Steele explained that in January 2022 OSMB resolved that:-

- That further update reports on the Grange Landfill site be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as and when there is a substantial change in the situation regarding the operation of the site or to any related issue.

- Updates will be provided in line with this and we expect this next to be when there are updates in relation to the outcomes in relation to footpaths, planning enforcement and the legal advice in relation to the call for evidence.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones stated that the same agreement was that if there were any significant changes in position, this would also be brought back to OSMB. Councillor Jones suggested that two Planning Inspectorate inquiries, a legal challenge around the classification of Phase 1 being contaminated and two access challenges to the Council's position which could end up in a legal challenge would constitute significant. He asked why this was not being reported?

Councillor Steele explained that he had only been appointed as Chair of OSMB at the current meeting but would provide assurances that he would speak with all the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Commissions as part of setting the work programme and if it was felt that more work was required on this matter, that work would be done. Councillor Steele would not make that decisions as an individual but with the other Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

28. Councillor Jones: In 2018 the Residents of Kimberworth filled claims around footpath claims over the land that has now been closed off by Grange Landfill LTD, last year the council was refused an inquiry due to the seal not being properly served. Can you give an update on where we are with this?

Councillor Alam explained that since the Planning Inspectorate changed their position, the Council had re-issued the Footpath Order, and this matter was currently with the Planning Inspectorate's Office who would deal with the Planning Inquiry through a hearing. The Council were currently awaiting a date and chasing to ensure that this was done as quickly as possible.

Councillor Jones stated that that might come as a surprise to the Planning Inspectorate. The footpath claim has taken over four years to get to the final stage and mired in administrational errors i.e., the seal. which caused the Council to re-serve the claim this year, including a further consultation period which should have concluded in January 2024. According to the government guidance on their website, the procedure should take 42 days. Yet, when speaking with the Panning

Inspectorate in the week prior, Councillor Jones stated that they had not received any paperwork from Rotherham Council for the inquiry to move forward. Councillor Jones asked Councillor Alam why this was?

Councillor Alam explained that he would take the question to the legal team and provide a written response.

29. Councillor A Carter: A resident has contacted me with their frustrations about the lack of planning enforcement regarding the MTL site in Brinsworth. Can the council please outline the current position regarding this?

    Councillor Taylor explained that when planning permission was granted, conditions were imposed restricting construction hours, as well as hours of use and of deliveries to mtl's new building once it becomes operational. However, the existing building which mtl occupied did not have any such restrictions on its use. The Council's planning enforcement team had received numerous alleged breaches of these conditions and had investigated all of the complaints to date including liaising directly with mtl. Part of the challenge was identifying which vehicles were going to which site, and whether the planning conditions applied in respect of those vehicles. As Councillor Carter was aware, the Council could not prevent vehicles travelling along Grange Lane as it was a public highway or to the existing site which did not have any restrictive conditions imposed upon it. Mtl had assured the enforcement team that the only breach of the construction hours condition was when a concrete mixing lorry turned up late due to batching plant issues and unfortunately with concrete there was a need to complete the pour to avoid abortive / defective works. As far as Councillor Taylor was aware there had not been any other specific breaches of the condition imposed on the planning permission.

    Councillor Carter asked what the outcome had been from the proven breach and what could be done to stop future breaches?

    Councillor Taylor explained that the breach had been a one-off, it had not been a pattern of breaches and the Council would only pursue enforcement action when it was expedient to do so. From the evidence that had been gathered to date, there was not enough to justify formal enforcement action.

30. Councillor A Carter: Having been told that moving traffic enforcement will now not take place on Wood Lane, would the council consider a trial of opening Wood Lane to traffic during non-peak times?

    Councillor Taylor explained that, following the completion of the Monitoring and Evaluation plan for the A630 Parkway Widening scheme, the Council had gathered significant data on traffic patterns and volumes in the area, including Wood Lane. The findings indicated that, even with the A630 scheme complete, opening Wood Lane to all

vehicle traffic would lead to a substantial increase in movements. Specifically, the projections showed an additional 400 vehicles passing through Brinsworth Centre during peak times, effectively doubling the current traffic levels. Of particular concern was the impact on Brinsworth Lane, where approximately 300 additional vehicles would pass by the Junior School in the inter-peak period. Given these findings, there was no intention to open the road to traffic at this time. The Council's primary concern was the safety and well-being of residents.

Councillor A Carter stated that it was disappointing to hear that a trial would not be considered. He had wanted the trial to take place between 7pm and 7am. He asked again if a trial could be considered and if not, when would it be reviewed again?

Councillor Taylor explained that residents safety was the main priority. Given the figures provided, it would not be wise to conduct a trial at this point. Further, any trial would also require a discussion with Sheffield City Council as Wood Lane connected across the administrative boundary. It was therefore not a decision the Council could take unilaterally.

31. Councillor Jones: In December 2023 you blocked a motion instructing officers not to allow access to public land to allow the reinstatement of BH5 can you please give us an update on what the councils current position is?

Councillor Read explained that the Council's position remained the same in that whilst it had the ability to monitor any potential groundwater pollution, it would take that opportunity. Subsequently, the Environment Agency had told the Council that they were asserting their legal rights to ensure that that took place, and the Council did not have an option about it. The Leader explained the EA had sent the Council a letter that simultaneously stated that and gave a background document that said the exact opposite. What the Leader had said more recently was that he wanted the Council to pursue every legal avenue to address the woeful service that the Environment Agency had given to the people of Rotherham. The Council were going through a process of taking legal advice and the Leader would provide an update once consideration of that advice had taken place.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Jones stated that he had had a telephone conversation with the officer that had now been tasked with overseeing Grange Landfill due to an error on their part to publish their complaints assessment report in December and March of 2024, a legal requirement. The Officer had explained that little had changed on-site but reaffirmed that BH 5 needed to be reinstated with the Council's permission or an alternative site needed to be approved under a new permitting application. Failure to do so and accept any waste on site would be an immediate breach of that permit. The Officer

went on to say that the re-permitting process was now backlogged, possibly into years. Councillor Jones asked the Leader if he would now guarantee that the Council would not give any access permission to reinstate BH 5? If not, why not if in their words, it is not a legal ability for them to force it on the Council?

The Leader explained that he could not comment on a telephone conversation that Councillor Jones had with someone unknown to him. The Council would continue to follow the legal process to establish the Council's rights. The fundamental position remained as it had always been and that was that it wanted to stop tipping from taking place on the site. If it could stop the borehole, and if, in turn it stopped tipping from taking place, then that would be done. The position at the moment was that the Council were not able to do that.

28. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.

FIELD_SUMMARY

(a) **FIELD_ITEM_NUMBER**

(b) FIELD_ITEM_NUMBER