

**COUNCIL MEETING
11th September, 2024**

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

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

48. MINUTE'S SILENCE

The Mayor was deeply saddened to report on the recent death of Allan Jackson, former Mayor and Councillor for Brinsworth and Catcliffe Ward.

As a mark of respect the meeting stood and observed a minute's silence.

49. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor formally opened the meeting pointing out that the Civic Mace was currently under repair and permission had been kindly granted by the Feoffees of the Common Lands of Rotherham for their mace to be used in its place.

The Mayor was also pleased to announce that the Council had been awarded the highest honour by the Government for supporting the Armed Forces Community. The Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme 2024 Gold Award. The Scheme encompassed bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledged, demonstrated or advocated support to the armed forces community and aligned their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

A full list of Mayoral engagements and activity since the last meeting were also appended to the Mayor's letter.

50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Resolved:- That apologies for absence be received from Councillors Ball, C. Carter, Foster, Jackson, Knight, Pitchley and Stables.

51. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous Council Meeting held on 17th July, 2024.

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Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 17th July, 2024, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Sheppard

52. PETITIONS

There were no petitions presented for consideration at this meeting.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

54. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Two public questions had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12:-

(1) Mr. Ashraf claimed the minutes and documentation of Council meetings was not fully accurate with information missing. For example, Councillor Alam was also referred to as Councillor Allen repeatedly in the information of the 28th February Council meeting. He asked how could the Council improve the accuracy of its minutes and official documentation without the need for help from the public?

Councillor Sheppard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working, thanked the member of the public for highlighting his concerns and confirmed that the particular instance he referred to had been corrected.

Staff in Democratic Services strived for high standards in the production of minutes, however, they were a summary of discussions to record the decisions taken in the meeting, along with a sense of the discussion around that decision. They were not a verbatim record or transcript of the meeting itself. Meetings that were webcast, like Council, were available for a year before being archived so were available for anyone to listen and hear verbatim what was discussed at a meeting.

Naturally human error did occur and were corrected where this arose. The minutes were always submitted to the next meeting for consideration and approval as a true and correct record of the proceedings, and provided the opportunity for any queries or inaccuracies to be addressed.

The minutes of other meetings, such as the Cabinet, Audit Committee, Planning Board and Licensing Board and Committee were amongst some which were submitted to Council again allowing for any discrepancies to be addressed.

In a supplementary question Mr. Ashraf thanked the named Councillors for their forbearance and liked to ask if officers of the Council could not tell the difference between Councillors Saghir Alam and Sarah Allen how would the public know the difference. For one person to make an error it was being human, but to make what he believed multiple errors in the same official document was a cause for concern. All attending Councillors then signed off the minutes without noticing calling into question their inability or unwillingness to put their heads above the parapet and challenge some simple mistakes which he believed were indicative of a wider more systemic noble nodding problem and very promiscuous for democratic accountability. Just as the Council's Solicitor's personal opinion was sometimes conflicted with the legal opinion and no one here seemed to be able to challenge it by asking for its legal basis or outside independent legal advice.

For example, the local Council had been able to successfully challenge the official interpretation of Section 17 of the Local Government Act 1988 in the courts, previously cited as the Leicester City Council ruling and the more recent Waltham Forest Council and Islington Council court judgments were, in reality, a flagrant contradiction of the legal opinion of the Council's solicitor.

In addition, while checking his spelling for the legal cases he wanted to cite this afternoon within minutes he came across the Procurement Act 2023, with a magic sub-heading written in bold "**The disapplication of duty in Section 17 of the Local Government Act 1988**". If someone as simple as himself could repeatedly drag the proverbial horse and cart through the blind defence of Section 17 of the Local Government Act 1988 without trying, why could those that were legally educated, trained and employed not do so as well.

Ladies and gentlemen, there were multiple legal avenues to fulfil the wishes of the petitioners in full. It was clearly not impossible, merely a matter of political will and competent legal advice.

Aside from my three suggestions at the last Cabinet meeting, how did the Council propose to remedy the naughty problem and asked would the Council seek independent legal advice following these court judgments and a last-minute legal discovery in order to fulfil the petition in full.

Councillor Sheppard again thanked the member of the public for his supplementary question and again gave his reassurance that staff in Democratic Services and everyone else at the Council strived for high standards in everything that was published and recorded. As he mentioned earlier sometimes errors did occur.

With regards to the recent Cabinet meeting a number of queries and questions were given and the member of the public indicated that he would submit them in writing to the Leader. Nothing as yet had been received so if all the concerns could be wrapped together then as soon as

they were received and analysed a response would be provided back to the member of the public.

(2) "T" was not present to ask the question so an answer would be provided in writing.

55. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no such items that required the exclusion of the press and public from this meeting.

56. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader was invited to present his statement and in doing so was pleased to report since the last Council Meeting Rotherham had seen the new Travelodge open which was the town's first branded hotel and last week was the official opening of Arc Cinema!

It was lovely to be joined by some of Rotherham's fabulous foster carers and their children (including Ricky who may steal the show in this week's press coverage). At the end of the day this was what this work was all about; building a better Borough for the next generation and creating a more family-friendly environment for Rotherham's young people to grow up in. Some Members were also present to attend a special film screening last week and everyone enjoyed that well-earned opportunity.

Last week, it was also great to see the Tour of Britain cycle race go through Rotherham via Wentworth, Wath, Swinton and Maltby, and the Rotherham Show returned at the weekend and the sun was shining (on Saturday at least).

For those who came down after the rain had passed on Sunday it turned out to be a lovely afternoon. The Leader thanked the team and all involved in making it possible.

Reference will be made later about the terrible violence that occurred in Manvers last month so this would not be dwelled upon at this point in the agenda, except to say that it was a matter of deep horror and regret that some of Rotherham's residents (including a Swinton resident) perpetrated such inhumane acts, that their barbarity shamed them and their families. The Leader hoped the tough action that the Government had taken subsequently served as a wakeup call to anyone tempted to get involved in such actions again in the future.

At the weekend people from all parts of the Borough and all backgrounds came together at Rotherham Show and had a great day out. This was who we were and that said more about Rotherham than the mindless actions of a very small minority.

The Leader also wanted to note a couple of awards received recently. The Council had been awarded the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme 2024 Gold Award which recognised the Council's support for the armed forces community and for its alignment with the values of the Armed Forces Covenant. He also paid tribute to Councillor Keenan for her steadfast resolution that this was an award Rotherham needed to achieve and the steps required for better support for veterans and their families. The Council owed her a debt of gratitude for that.

Also, Rotherham Food Network had won an award for tackling food challenges that were faced by communities. The network was a partnership made up of twenty-six organisations including the Council, VAR and Rotherfed.

The Leader wanted to close his speech by saying something about the Government's proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

As Members may be aware the Government was out to consultation and Rotherham would be making a submission as part of that process.

The Government wanted to see many more new homes built in our Country, and more of those to be Council and social housing homes, which was right.

The Leader was really proud of the work done to deliver hundreds more new Council homes in Rotherham over the last few years and the work that Councillor Allen continued to lead on this agenda. Standing here there was more than a hundred households in temporary accommodation because they were homeless. This had been discussed previously how this had spilt out into hotels because there was simply not the capacity. It was hoped the intentions of the Deputy Prime Minister had set out would enable the delivery of many more new Council homes.

Unfortunately, the NPPF consultation also suggested an uplift of 125% in the number of homes that needed planning for and to ensure land was available for every year. That number appeared to be built on a crude national formula, which specifically disregarded how many homes the market could build in a given area.

Rotherham had seen about 650 new homes built each year and that number had remained fairly stable for about twenty years now. Recently more than one in ten of those were Council homes. That was despite the fact that there was planning provision and land available to build more than 900 homes each year.

In fact today there were 5,800 homes with planning permission in the Borough that have not been built, while Oflog data suggested that Rotherham was the best performing Planning Authority in the country.

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Since the year 2000 there have never been more than 1,092 new homes registered in a single year. So a new annual target of 1,233 new homes each and every year (which was what the NPPF proposals set out) was not only inappropriate, it would also be unachievable. It was perfectly possible that trying to review our Local Plan and find those extra sites would actually slow down house building in the Borough.

Land availability was not the reason that more homes were not being built in Rotherham, and simply making huge areas of land available only served to give developers free rein.

The Leader was, therefore, really clear with Members that that was what would be said in the consultation response and that if the Government really did want to see all those new homes built, it was hoped they would work with us to settle on a methodology that made that delivery possible, rather than tying us up in years of a Local Plan review which would not achieve what it was intended to do.

In responding to the Leader, Councillor Currie opened the questions and responded with his own concerns about reading about housing builds, which he welcomed, but asked if consideration would be given to bringing forward other sites which may not have been used in the past because the past may become a pleasant and hopelessness future (Bassingthorpe Farm).

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester wished to put on record his own tribute to the former Mayor and Councillor Allan Jackson.

He had also been and visited the new Arc Cinema and sat in the best seats.

In terms of the consultation on the National Policy Planning Framework there have been many discussions and he welcomed the Leader's comments about scope, numbers and the densities especially around the town centre developments and whether these could be increased and improved.

Councillor Z. Collingham, in responding to the Leader, referred to the housing target that had been rolled out for Rotherham being unachievable and based on a crude formula and how this reminded him of the many criticisms made of the previous Government's policies. He asked how could the Council have any more confidence, in his view, in a Government that was going to roll out policies based on a crude formulae that was unachievable rather than appearing as though it had not been thought through and more about symbolism?

Councillor Bacon also referred to housing targets and asked if the Leader could reiterate the protections for Todwick's Green Bell, including up past 2028. He also asked about the huge and unprecedented investments into Forge Island, including delays and slippage. The Borough was also

seeing big slippage in other projects around the Borough as well, for example, £5 million on the mainline station. He wondered at what point did the Leader believe there must be some concentration on areas south of the Borough in places like Todwick and Maltby.

Councillor A. Carter expressed his disappointment that it had taken nearly two months for the Labour administration here to decide that actually their national Government was wrong on the housing target. He thought it would be longer for Labour Group here to realise and it was very disappointing that it happened so quickly.

As a Council what was needed was to make sure that house building was incentivised and expanded throughout the Borough and not just to the few big housebuilders who seem to have merged and got even bigger. This would allow for small-scale housebuilders to build houses not priced out the market.

From looking at the consultation it proposed to increase planning application costs from £258 to £528 so asked the Leader if this was the right thing that Rotherham should be doing given that many more homes were needed.

The Leader thanked his colleagues for their comments.

In responding to Councillor Currie he pointed out that it was worth noting that the assumptions included all the previously allocated sites in the existing Local Plan, so this included the Bassingthorpe Farm site to achieve a bigger number of sites that were available each year. He was deliberately trying not to say houses built as the Council were not responsible for the houses that got built. The Council was merely responsible for making space available for the houses to be built. In order to reach a much bigger number, more than double the current target would require the use of those sites that have been used before. It would also include the safeguarded land sites within the local plan, which were set aside not for delivery in the current period, but for potential delivery in the future.

The Leader welcomed the news that Councillor Bennett-Sylvester had visited and made use of the seats in the cinema. He acknowledged the point about density, which was well made and the beginnings of those conversations.

Of course this was a consultation at the moment, but the beginnings of those consultations was the taking part. It was simply not enough to identify, but given the nature of Rotherham to make up the shortfall. Rotherham can do more.

The point was well made about the potential around the centre of town, but these must be the right types of dwellings that people required.

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Councillor Z. Collingham questioned confidence and as Leader representations would be made to ensure that, in our view, the right kind of development took place and he reiterated to opposition Members that by opposing housing developments time and time again this Council was taking a more measured approach to funding more Council housing in the Borough rather than making the homelessness crisis worse. This would give people a lot more confidence than simply saying on a site-by-site basis and politicising the Planning Board.

Councillor Bacon understandably asked about the sites at Todwick and it was pointed out that those sites were protected. In terms of the Local Plan this was going through the consultation process at the moment. Of course, if it was recommended that there was to be a Green Belt Review, then the Green Belt sites would be considered, the ownership of the sites of which were unknown.

In terms of the delivery of capital schemes the Leader was pleased with the investments that were coming through in Rotherham having waited a long time to see these investments come through. If the mainline station aspiration was delivered this was a game changer, but would have to be in a central location at the heart of the Borough, because that was where the most people would live within a commutable distance of it. The Council was not in control of Network Rail and famously any schemes that involved Network Rail do take a long time to come to fruition.

In taking account of what Councillor Bacon's questions were where he asked for more focus on the southern part of the Borough, but then suggested no building took place on Green Belt land. It was for opposition Members to decide about the nature of development in certain communities and not in others. However, in order to deliver the Government's aspiration for more houses Rotherham was committed to playing its part in doing this and hopefully the rules would help to achieve this. The Council would simply not be allocating 1,200 spaces for 1,200 homes each year. It was more about seeing what could be delivered and work with perhaps a bigger number that was deliverable.

Over the last twenty years the Council had spent money of HRA resources seeing more social housing delivered. This had to be a plan that people could trust and it had to be a plan that would deliver the homes that people needed, not a plan that simply opened the floodgates to speculative development and did not in the end see those homes delivered to bigger developers. Rotherham did not want to fall hostage to big developers. The Council's small housebuilding initiative was actually about channelling real efforts into supporting local and regional small housebuilders to deliver on schemes in the area.

Part of the reason for this was to stimulate local jobs, local employment and local skills and being subject to a national housing market which was much bigger.

In terms of planning charges, they did not need to go up any more than they needed to. This Government had recognised the planning system nationally and how it needed to be properly resourced. This Government was committed which was welcomed and would provide for additional planning resources in Councils across the country and ensure appropriate staff, not just in Rotherham.

57. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING

Consideration was given to the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29th July, 2024.

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 29th July, 2024, be received.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Sheppard

58. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Further to Minute No. 30 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29th July, 2024, consideration was given to the report which set out the project plan for the preparation, adoption and review of Rotherham Local Plan documents. The report, therefore, outlined a revised Local Development Scheme to amend the timetable for the partial update of the Local Plan Core Strategy and included the preparation of a South Yorkshire Joint Waste Plan.

A full scale review of the Local Plan was not recommended as it was a huge commitment and very time consuming. The day after the Cabinet meeting the Government announced its revised housing delivery expectations. At this stage, until the consultation was complete, it was only possible to speculate about the impact on Rotherham's policy.

It was, therefore, recommended to support the proposals presented at the meeting.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester made reference to upcoming consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework and asked how many questions were explored as to whether there was an imbalance at the moment between where builders wanted to build and available sites.

In terms of policies there was some uncertainty around the process and it was hoped Members would still be able to debate about relevant sites, the town centre and the supply of greenfield sites.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy confirmed his door was always open and was always willing to answer queries from other Members.

Resolved:- That the revised Local Development Scheme be approved and adopted.

Moved by: Councillor Taylor

Seconder by: Councillor Williams

59. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

Consideration was given to the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 and tribute made by the current Chair to former Councillors Clark and Wyatt in the role they played in the scrutiny process, alongside the officers involved.

The 2023/24 Annual Report provided an overview of activity undertaken by Scrutiny over the last year through key lines of inquiry, evidence gathering, and findings leading to recommendations. In addition, it also provided a selection of the year's achievement of Scrutiny as a supplement to full agendas and minutes of Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the three Select Commission meetings throughout the year.

As the new Chair, Councillor Steele, would like to ensure the meeting remained non-political and would listen fairly to the debates and discussions.

The Annual Report as presented detailed the review of scrutiny processes. This included reviewing work programming, the role of the Link Officer for each commission, the scrutiny review process and the scrutiny review tracker.

Some of the work carried out over the last twelve months by the Select Commissions was highlighted which included maternity services making sure that services were fit for purpose for all the people of Rotherham. In addition, work had taken place on equality and diversity ensuring the Council met its 2025 target, Early Years and preparation for school, private provision, health practices and how better services could be delivered across Rotherham for our young people.

Improving Places had looked specifically at the flooding in Catcliffe and how improvements could continue. Further work was planned and the Chair of Improving Places would look to invite additional attendance by other Members for certain aspects.

The Chair applauded the work on all sub-committees and commissions and also work by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board looking at the Budget and Council Tax.

In seconding the report Councillor Bacon, Vice-Chair, placed on record his own thanks to the officers who worked in Scrutiny and to the current Chair for his joint working approach.

Councillor A. Carter on receiving the report asked, if scrutiny was non-political, why there was not a mix politically for Chairs and Vice-Chairs. Until this was equally shared out he would be unable to support the recommendation.

Councillor Currie had noted vacancies that existed on some of the Select Commissions and whilst they were politically balanced and seats allocated accordingly, asked if some of these vacancies could be offered to other Councillors who wished to be involved and attend.

Councillor Steele, Chair, was unable to change the political membership arrangements for scrutiny, but he maintained his impartiality and would not take sides. He would continue to adopt frank and open discussions as part of the meetings and would ensure Chairs were equipped to undertake their roles effectively.

Scrutiny did a good and effective job in Rotherham and was all about holding the executive and officers to account whilst improving Council policy.

Resolved:- That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Annual Report 2023/24 be received and the contents noted.

Mover:- Councillor Steele

Seconder:- Councillor Bacon

60. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

Consideration was given to the Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24 which brought together in one document a summary of the work undertaken. The production of the report complied with current best practice for Audit Committees allowing it to demonstrate how it had fulfilled its terms of reference and shared its achievements with the Council and served as a useful reminder to the organisation of the role of the Committee in providing assurance about the Council's governance, risk management and financial and business controls.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) had previously issued guidance to local authorities to help ensure that Audit Committees operated effectively. The guidance recommended that Audit Committees should report annually on how they have discharged their responsibilities.

The CIPFA guidance was revised and re-issued in 2022 and as a result, the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference were updated and agreed by the Audit Committee in March 2023 and subsequently approved by full Council on 19th July 2023.

Resolved:- That the Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24 be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Marshall

Seconder:- Councillor Baggaley

61. NOTICE OF MOTION - RESOLUTION CONDEMNING FAR-RIGHT ACTIONS IN MANVERS, ROTHERHAM

An amendment to the original motion was accepted by the mover and seconder of the original Motion and, therefore, further to Procedure Rule 18(14) the amendment was incorporated into the Motion for debate (inclusions highlighted in bold italics).

Original moved by Councillor Steele and seconded by Councillor Hughes and the amendment was moved by Councillor Tarmey and seconded by Councillor A. Carter.

Summary/Background:-

Rotherham Council is committed to promoting a safe, inclusive, and diverse community for all residents.

Recent actions by far-right groups in Manvers, Rotherham, have sought to undermine these values by inciting hatred, fear, and division within our community.

Such actions are diametrically opposed to the principles of equality, respect and harmony that Rotherham stands for.

Further, far-right actions have caused distress and fear among residents and has threatened the peace and stability of our community.

Terrorism is defined by the Terrorism Act (2000) as: the use or threat of serious violence against a person or serious damage to a property where that action is:-

- i. Designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public; and***
- ii. for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial, or ideological cause.***

That this Council:-

- 1. Believes that the violence seen in Rotherham this August fits the definition of terrorism.***

2. Condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the far-right actions in Manvers, Rotherham and any similar activities that promote hate and division.
3. Reaffirm its commitment to fostering an inclusive community where diversity is celebrated, and all residents feel safe and valued.
4. Call upon local law enforcement agencies to take all necessary actions to address and prevent further far-right activities in our community.
5. Encourage community leaders, organisations, and residents to stand united against hatred and work together to promote mutual understanding and respect.
6. Support initiatives and programmes aimed at educating the public about the dangers of far-right ideologies and the importance of diversity and inclusion.
7. Pledges to work with local, regional and national authorities to ensure that all measures are taken to prevent the spread of far-right extremism in Rotherham.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:-

1. Commit to providing support and resources to those affected by far-right actions, ensuring they have access to the necessary help and guidance.
2. Call for a united front among all political parties, community groups and citizens to unequivocally reject far-right extremism and to work towards a more inclusive and harmonious society.

The amended motion was put and carried unanimously.

62. NOTICE OF MOTION - CHILD POVERTY (ABOLISH TWO-CHILD BENEFIT CAP)

Moved by Councillor Yasseen and seconded by Councillor Currie

That this Council:

1. Notes with concern that:-
 - a. around a third of children in Rotherham live in poverty and the number has increased by 27 per cent since 2014/15 to reach 18,550 in 2021/22, and there has been four-fold increase in the number of food parcels;

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- b. 12,650 Rotherham children were eligible for free school meals in 2023/24, a rise of 84 per cent since 2015/16 despite the fact that working families earning above £7,400 per annum are not eligible, meaning that around a third of all school-aged children living in poverty are prevented from having free school meals;
 - c. a large and growing number of families in Rotherham receive no support from Universal Credit for one or more children due to the two-child benefit cap, with the average family losing out on £4,300 per year on average, and a corresponding serious impact on children's material wellbeing, nutrition, mental health and opportunities;
 - d. notes the compounding impact of welfare reforms since 2012, including the two child benefit cap since 2017, which have increased the risk to our poorest children from poverty, destitution, food insecurity, homelessness and denial of basic needs, resulting in the heightened vulnerability of children to sexual and economic exploitation, as well as greater inequality; and
2. Confirms its commitment to making Rotherham a Child-Centred Borough where the resources of the Council and partner agencies are harnessed to support every child to be the best they can;
3. Welcomes Council measures to alleviate poverty, including local welfare provision, local council tax support and funding for advice services but understands that only Government action can reduce child poverty substantially, such as removing the two-child benefit cap (cost of £2.5bn), and providing universal free school meals in all primary schools (cost of £1bn);
4. Notes that, disappointingly, the leadership of the two largest Westminster parties have refused to adopt either of these two policies; and
5. Therefore, the Council writes to the Government to convey the importance and urgency of alleviating child poverty and the harm it causes including the **vulnerability of children to exploitation**.

The Council resolves to request that the Government commits to:

- (i) abolishing the two-child cap on benefits;
- (ii) expanding free school meals to every child in primary school, and every secondary school child whose family receives Universal Credit;
- (iii) raising the income threshold for free school meals in line with inflation, backdated to match the real terms level in 2018 to reflect the rising cost of living; and

6. Requests Cabinet to co-ordinate the development of a new strategy to reduce the impact of child poverty in Rotherham.

The motion was put and carried.

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

For: The Mayor (Councillor Cowen), Councillors Adair, Ahmed, Alam, Allen, Baggaley, Baker-Rogers, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Beresford, Bower, Brent, A. Carter, Clarke, Currie, Cusworth, Duncan, Elliott, Garnett, Harper, Havard, Hughes, Hussain, Ismail, Jones, Keenan, Lelliott, Marshall, Mault, McKiernan, Monk, Rashid, Read, Ryalls, Sheppard, Steele, Sutton, Tarmey, Taylor, Williams and Yasseen.

Against: Councillors Bacon, Baum-Dixon, Blackham, T. Collingham, Z. Collingham, Fisher, Hall, Reynolds, Thorp and Tinsley.

Abstentions: None.

63. NOTICE OF MOTION - TARGETING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Moved by Councillor Thorp and seconded by Councillor Blackham

Summary/Background:

With the increase in housing developments, there is a significant strain on existing infrastructure in Rotherham, particularly education, healthcare and community facilities.

Prioritised use of the Strategic element of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is one of the ways the Council can fund essential infrastructure improvements, supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of residents affected by development and ensuring their basic needs are met.

The CIL bid assessment process agreed by Cabinet in July 2024 provides a framework, but decision-making in relation to approved schemes is ultimately a political choice and this should be guided by clear priorities.

Firstly, in inviting bids for Strategic CIL funding, the Council should give preference to addressing the wider impact of development in the specific Wards or areas where significant development has taken place. While Section 106 agreements and the Neighbourhood element of CIL address this in part, the Council should aim to do more and deploy Strategic CIL funding to supplement these.

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Secondly, the Council should give preference to helping facilitate the construction, expansion or other improvement of fundamental services and facilities such as:

1. Healthcare Facilities: including doctors' surgeries, dental practices, and other healthcare facilities that provide essential services to the community.
2. Educational Institutions: including schools, colleges, and educational facilities to meet educational needs in growing communities.
3. Community Amenities: including facilities that directly benefit local residents, such as community centres, libraries, and recreational areas, which contribute to the social and cultural development of the area and public wellbeing.

These are core elements of our local infrastructure and central concerns of our residents, unlike bus and cycle lanes, which do not meet immediate community needs or provide general public amenity.

The current Infrastructure Development Study (IDS 2021) also identified that the improvement and expansion of these core services could be achieved far more cost effectively than active travel projects. Prioritising fundamental service improvement is also in line with common practice to first deliver schemes that can be comparatively quick, quoted and followed through. The Council can and should act as an enabler, by using Strategic CIL funding to help education, health and other partners to deliver their own planned improvements more quickly and sustainably.

Engagement with Elected Members is vital to forming an accurate understanding of neighbourhood concerns and securing community support for improvements. Future review by Scrutiny of the bid assessment process and implementation of chosen schemes is essential to ensure a proper and robust process for Strategic CIL expenditure.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:-

1. Call on Cabinet to commit to prioritising bids for the creation, expansion or improvement of education, health and community facilities wherever possible, in preference to active travel schemes.
2. Request that officers proactively contact education and health partners in Wards where development has recently taken place or is planned, including Dinnington, Wickersley, Aston, Sitwell and many non-parished areas, to explore pursuing infrastructure improvements identified in the IDS 2021.

3. Request that the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment facilitates a briefing for all Elected Members on the draft shortlist of schemes for Strategic CIL funding, inviting feedback on the same for inclusion in the report to Cabinet.
4. Request that the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) allocate time within the 2025/26 work programme of the appropriate select commission to scrutinise the efficacy of the bid assessment process and initial implementation of the chosen CIL schemes.

The motion was put and LOST.

(The Leader agreed to take forward a training session on the Community Infrastructure Levy to aid navigation around the subject matter for Members)

64. NOTICE OF MOTION - WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

Moved by Councillor A. Carter and seconded by Councillor Tarmey

Summary/Background:-

Council notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.

Council also notes that the failure of successive Conservative governments has led to significant increases in heating costs in recent years.

Though many agree that universal Winter Fuel Payments are not necessary, Council is deeply concerned that many pensioners on lower and middle incomes will now not receive the payments. Across England and Wales the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).

In Rotherham the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 42,185. That means that nearly 87% of pensioners currently eligible for winter fuel payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.

Council believes that the Labour Government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for Winter Fuel Payments far too low. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits. This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.

Council is also concerned by the low take up of pension credit with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them – and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so. Council recognises the role we have to play to increase awareness of benefits such as Pension Credit to ensure people are aware of the support they are entitled to.

Council further notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October, which combined by the removal of Winter Fuel Payments will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:-

5. Write to all MP's covering Rotherham asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.
6. Request the Council write a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new Winter Fuel Payment policy to be suspended and reviewed.
7. Urgently commence an awareness campaign to maximise the uptake of pension credit in Rotherham. This will include use of council noticeboards, social media, promotion in the local press and targeted letters posted to those who may be eligible.

The motion was put and carried.

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

For: The Mayor (Councillor Cowen), Councillors Adair, Ahmed, Alam, Allen, Bacon, Baggaley, Baker-Rogers, Baum-Dixon, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Beresford, Blackham, Bower, Brent, A. Carter, Clarke, T. Collingham, Z. Collingham, Duncan, Elliott, Fisher, Garnett, Hall, Harper, Havard, Hughes, Ismail, Jones, Keenan, Marshall, Mault, McKiernan, Monk, Rashid, Read, Reynolds, Sheppard, Steele, Sutton, Tarmey, Taylor, Thorp, Tinsley and Williams

Against: None.

Abstentions: Councillor Currie.

65. AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

Mover:- Councillor Marshall

Seconder:- Councillor Baggaley

66. LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE AND LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

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

Mover:- Councillor Hughes

Seconder:- Councillor Beresford

67. PLANNING BOARD

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

Mover:- Councillor Williams

Seconder:- Councillor Mault

68. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

There were no questions for consideration by Spokespersons.

69. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

(1) Councillor Currie asked please could the Cabinet Member explain the Council's housing strategy when a tenant goes into care, in regard to the upkeep of the garden and hedges?

Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, explained that when a tenant went into residential care, the gardens and hedges were generally maintained by relatives of the tenants. The service would organise for a garden to be cut back upon notification that the garden/hedges were overgrown, if they were aware that the tenant was in a care home and there were no relatives to undertake this work.

In a supplementary question Councillor Currie was aware of where this was an issue in three instances.

Councillor Allen agreed to pick this up with Councillor Currie outside of the meeting.

(2) Councillor Tinsley asked with the consultation now live for improvements on Maltby High Street, would the Council actually take on board feedback from Councillors and residents?

Councillor Sheppard, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working, explained the collection of feedback on the proposals from Councillors and residents was critical to developing a successful scheme. Therefore, the online survey and in-person event aimed to gather as many views as possible. Officers would

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review all comments and suggestions and endeavor to bring forward a scheme that was well supported locally.

In a supplementary question Councillor Tinsley outlined his concerns following the first consultation and the feedback received where virtually everything that had been identified was not actioned. He referred to the additional CCTV and lighting to make streets safer, the capacity of litter bins, placement of seating in areas where they were not wanted and development areas of the High Street.

It appeared no-one was listening and he expressed his concern that although comments were welcomed online and in person, only one face-to-face consultation event had been arranged. This scheme in Maltby was one of the biggest schemes of the Towns and Villages Fund so he suggested a meeting for a conversation take place. There were concerns and rather than pushing something through that residents were unhappy with, it would be better for an initial discussion.

Councillor Sheppard was more than happy for further discussion and would take this forward.

(3) Councillor Tinsley asked with the Tour of Britain coming through Rotherham on 5th September, could the Cabinet Member tell him of any financial contributions that may have come from RMBC or the SYCMA to host the event.

Councillor Taylor, Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, explained that to date the costs incurred by Rotherham Council, as a "best estimate", at this stage were £3,000 for bunting, large flags and hand waving flags and £3,000 for traffic management.

In a supplementary question Councillor Tinsley welcomed events such as this for the Borough, but his main issue was with the date it was scheduled. The event through the Borough took place on Thursday when many of the children had returned to school following the summer break. Was this good value for money as the event did not quite have the impact, although it did go down well.

Councillor Taylor explained that whilst there were always investments, events such as this were structured with rules and arranged well in advance. However, further discussions were taking place to bring the tournament back into South Yorkshire in the future.

(4) Councillor Beck pointed out that following a water main burst on 1st September several properties in Kiveton Park were flooded again twelve months after a similar incident at the same location. He asked did the Cabinet Member agree with him that this incident in addition to thirty-five other water main bursts along the three main roads through Kiveton Park since 2005 was completely unacceptable and negligent from Yorkshire Water.

Councillor Taylor, Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, agreed with Councillor Beck about how the inconvenience for local residents must be deeply aggravating.

Yorkshire Water have confirmed that they have thresholds or triggers that have to be met before water mains could be considered for replacement. The Council's Highways and Flood Risk Service have consulted with Yorkshire Water and they have confirmed that the water main on the B6059 Station Road, Kiveton Park had now met these requirements, and would be replaced between April 2025 and March 2026. Whilst these works would create further inconvenience it was hoped they would bring about the long-term resolution needed.

In a supplementary question Councillor Beck asked if the Council would consider writing to Yorkshire Water to express concerns regarding the adverse effects on residents whose properties sustained damage and the level of support offered to them. This was happening across the whole of the Borough and with ageing infrastructure parts of the system starting to fail. There were three or four properties that were devastated by an incident and twelve months after their refurbishment there has been yet another so there was an issue of compensation.

Councillor Taylor was happy to assist, but was unsure whether that work was ongoing. He had not received any dialogue, but would look to do a little investigating and come back to Councillor Beck.

(5) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's question was asking the Cabinet Member if he could confirm or deny that in June RMBC officers were involved in serving notices and taking action regards travellers residing on land owned by Wickersley Parish Council?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written answer to his question.

(6) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's question was asking what preparations were being made by Adult Social Care and Health authorities to deal with extra demand due to older people not being able to heat their homes this winter?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written answer to his question.

(7) Councillor Baggaley asked would the Cabinet Member commit to working with himself and his fellow Ward Councillor to engage residents in the consideration of future flood defences and improvements to warning systems?

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Councillor Sheppard, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working, confirmed he would work with others and was aware this was a huge priority for Councillors Baggaley and Adair.

The Council and Environment Agency (EA) have committed to investigate flood alleviation schemes around Catcliffe and Treeton and the proposal had been placed on the Environment Agency's medium-term plan and the Council have funded hydraulic modelling of the River Rother to view suitable options. Initial discussions have taken place with Derbyshire County Council to discuss joint working on upstream storage to attenuate flood water during storm events.

The Environment Agency have carried out a full review of the flood alerts and warnings offered to residents of Catcliffe Village and Treeton Village. The Council attended the Environment Agency's incident room following Storm Babet to provide feedback on how improvements could be made to the warning system and the Environment Agency have made changes to the Treeton flood warnings. Both officers and the Cabinet Member remained committed to working with all relevant stakeholders to seek to improve flood defences and the response to such incidents.

In a supplementary question Councillor Baggaley welcomed the Cabinet Member's commitment, but had yesterday attended one of the first drop-in sessions for Storm Babet at Catcliffe Memorial Hall and had talked with a number of partners.

One of the issues discussed was around the time the flood warnings were issued and how quick the volunteer Flood Wardens were in operation. He, therefore, expressed thanks to the volunteer Flood Wardens and sought assurances as to what the Council were doing to ensure that the concerns, suggestions and the local intelligence of the Flood Wardens was acted upon by the Environment Agency in response to a flooding incident.

Councillor Sheppard considered the work of the Flood Wardens to be absolutely vital to reassure communities and provide assistance when there was a major flood event. There was a limited number of officers who were able to help out in various locations across the Borough, but if support with additional training and equipment was available it would be less burden on local residents at those times.

The four South Yorkshire authorities were coming together to focus on how improvements could be made and the reactions to flooding events. Rotherham had taken the lead on community leadership and had done some work in pioneering new ways of working with communities with parish councils.

(8) Councillor Tinsley asked with consultations set to start shortly around Public Space Protections Orders across the Borough, would this factor in the motion previously presented around byelaws and protection of parks and lifesaving equipment.

Councillor Alam, Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities, explained that as Councillor Tinsley was aware, following the previously presented motion, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board was asked to undertake a review which happened in May last year.

That review heard how other powers were likely to be more effective in these circumstances. However, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board did discuss a further specific review on life-saving equipment and the Cabinet would consider the findings of that review when they were concluded. Until that stage a further extension of byelaws was not being considered as part of the Public Space Protections Orders review.

In a supplementary question Councillor Tinsley asked if consideration could be given to the motion with throw lines being damaged.

Councillor Alam was aware of one recorded case of damage to the equipment, but would wait for feedback.

(9) Councillor Tinsley asked when the Our Place Fund became available for projects around the Borough, could this be used to complete or make further enhancements to Maltby High Street.

Councillor Sheppard, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working, explained the detailed set of criteria for the Our Places Fund projects was currently being developed.

A report was scheduled to come to Cabinet in November with proposals around this. Consideration would be given to adding value to existing schemes where appropriate, but also the prioritisation of areas that have not received significant funding.

(10) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's question referring to it being estimated that nearly 4000 Rotherham pensioners failed to claim Pension Credit that they were entitled to. His question asked what extra measures were the Council putting in place to ensure uptake of this benefit ahead of the 21st December, 2024 Winter Fuel Allowance cut off?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written answer to his question.

(11) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's question referred to how in July a meeting was held with the Cabinet Member and local Members over the latest cuts to the Thrybergh Country Park development. He asked when could he expect to see the notes from that meeting?

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Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written answer to his question.

(12) Councillor Clarke explained how she was pleased that after Purdah, Dinnington Ward Councillors were receiving monthly updates again regarding the regeneration project. However, she had not received an update regarding the flood alleviation work for Laughton Common so asked could she be assured that this work for Laughton was on track and like the regeneration project, the Ward Councillors would get regular updates.

Councillor Sheppard, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working, confirmed that he was pleased to be able to confirm that the work on the development of Laughton's flood defence scheme was on track.

The "Approval in Principle" phase was approaching completion. Ground investigations were now in the process of being organised with the RMBC Land Team. As was often the case with such projects there were other potential developments that the Council needed to be mindful of – in this case a solar power development received planning permission on one of the identified sites for flood storage. Fortunately, the Council was currently having positive discussions about collaboration with the developer to find a way for both schemes to be constructed.

Updates relating to the six Priority Flood Alleviation Schemes, which included the Eel Mires Dike Flood Alleviation Scheme at Laughton Common, were regularly provided at the Improving Places Select Commission meetings. During the feasibility study for the proposed scheme, the Council had delivered over two thousand leaflets to residents in Laughton and the surrounding area updating the community on the scheme's progress, which was now nearing completion of the "Approval in Principle" phase.

Following the recent publication of the 'Storm Babet – Section 19 Report', the Council had arranged a "Drop in" session to be held at the Lyric Theatre Hall in Dinnington between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. on 18th September 2024. This was to invite residents and other stakeholders to discuss any issues or questions relating to the events of Storm Babet or the proposed flood alleviation scheme and, of course, would ensure that appropriate updates were provided to Councillor Clarke and the other Ward Members.

(13) Councillor Clarke noted that there were two vacancies advertised recently for Resilience Officers as part of the Council's Emergency Response Team. She appreciated the closing date was very recent but asked could she please be updated regarding the recruitment to these important roles.

Councillor Alam, Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities, confirmed shortlisting took place on Friday, 6th September for the Resilience Officer roles, which sat as part of the Council's Emergency Planning Team. A good number of applications had been received which would be measured against the shortlisting criteria and, where appropriate, invited for interview in line with the Council processes. Interviews were set to take place in mid to late September.

(14) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's question asked how at the July meeting the Cabinet Member confirmed the HRA was used to fund officer hours in neighbourhoods so had asked what was the total staffing cost for neighbourhoods and how much was contributed from HRA?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written answer to his question.

(15) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's question referred to one of the biggest mistakes by this Borough over the past decade was the scrapping of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. He asked what would need to happen to restore it?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written answer to his question.

(16) Councillor A. Carter asked did the Cabinet Member share the frustrations of Brinsworth residents that the promised adaptations to the parking outside the shops on Brinsworth Lane have not yet happened?

Councillor Sheppard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working, confirmed that frustrations regarding the delays to the delivery of this scheme were appreciated and he thanked residents and stakeholders for their patience and understanding.

Some legal requirements were still being resolved to enable the Council to bring forward the improvements. Ultimately, the Council could not make improvements on private land until the necessary agreements and permissions were in place. In the meantime, the Deputy Leader was pleased to advise that the procurement process was underway to bring a contractor on board to deliver the scheme. A programme for the delivery of the works was expected to be finalised in the coming weeks and this would be communicated to Members and residents.

In a supplementary question Councillor A. Carter referred to briefings in late February/early March where it was believed legal agreements had been received and it was hoped work would have commenced by Easter. He expressed his frustrations at what appeared to be ever changing goal posts and delays to get this scheme off the ground. He, therefore, sought assurances that there would be progressed by the next Council meeting or by Christmas.

Councillor Sheppard apologised that there were delays, but gave his assurance that he himself and officers were working as quickly as they could to get those legal requirements in place. Once they were this information would be communicated to Councillor Carter.

(17) Councillor A. Carter referred to Brinsworth having one of the lowest vaccination rates in the Borough so asked what work was being done to improve this situation?

Councillor Baker-Rogers, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, explained Rotherham's Public Health Service was working with colleagues in NHS England's Screening and Immunisation Team in South Yorkshire to raise awareness of the importance of childhood vaccines and identify areas where vaccine uptake was lower for specific targeted work. A letter had been sent to parents via Rotherham schools as part of the return to school information, reminding parents about the importance of checking their child was up-to-date with vaccines, giving more information and urging anyone missing doses to contact their GP for a catch-up appointment. This would also be included in neighbourhood newsletter communications.

Public Health and Immunisation leads have discussed with local community organisations and schools' further ways of increasing messaging and reaching unvaccinated children and several GP practices with lowest uptake were currently offering some additional catch-up vaccination clinics. Intrahealth (the local school aged immunisation provider) were also supporting by addressing missing childhood vaccines particularly in areas of low uptake for those rising five years of age and reviewing the records of all Year 11 young people to check vaccination histories and offer missing immunisations prior to leaving school.

The 2022/23 latest data showed uptake for Brinsworth Medical Centre was 88.3% for children aged five who had received a re-enforcing dose of the diphtheria, tetanus, polio and pertussis/whooping cough jab and at least two doses of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) between the ages of one and five years. It was worth noting, that Rotherham did have comparatively good vaccination rates, so whilst this figure was not high enough, the South Yorkshire average was 85.3% and England 81.5%.

In a supplementary question Councillor A. Carter confirmed that the 88% referred to the answer was nowhere near the level needed to tackle the rising epidemic of measles in our country and in localities around here. Councillor Carter was particularly interested to hear what the Council and Public Health were doing. It was not just about writing to people in the hope that they would read it and then book a GP appointment. Some would be reluctant to discuss concerns and it did not seem a very effective way to encourage immunisation.

There were a few different reasons for vaccine refusal within a population with discredited and untrue fears from the nineties. There were also cultural and historic reasons within certain demographics where there was lower take-up vaccinations due to potential mistrust of the healthcare professions. There were also those in deprived areas and those who struggled to find time in very busy lives through their work and childcare commitments to then prioritise something that may possibly help their child in the future.

There were groups that were difficult to engage so what approach could be used to increase vaccination rates when the current approach did not appear to be working.

Councillor Baker-Rogers pointed out every effort was being made to reach out and encourage parents to ensure their children were vaccinated. She agreed to seek further information to see what was being done to engage with hard-to-reach groups, but welcomed any ideas as to how vaccination rates could be increased.

(18) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's question referenced how for several months the bus station had been blighted by ripped and vandalised seating. He asked what conversations have been had with SYMCA regards its management and the look this vandalism gives to our town centre?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written answer to his question.

(19) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's question referred how on August 27th @Rothbiz published an article regards new possible bus lanes in Rotherham and asked when would somebody be talking to Members in the Wards that may be affected by such a move?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written answer to his question.

(20) Councillor Clarke asked did Elected Members receive training to be effective on the ground when an emergency response was required, not just in her own Ward, but to contribute to the resilience to the team Borough-wide. She asked could she please be included in forthcoming training dates.

Councillor Alam, Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities, confirmed the Council had in place a robust approach to responding to major incidents which recognised the significant role that Elected Members could and did play in the event of a major incident.

Whilst there was no expectation for Elected Members to become directly involved in responding to a Major Incident the plan did recognise the need to keep Elected Members informed so that they in turn could provide a

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trusted source of information in the community. Members also provided critical feedback and information in relation to their communities and often played a significant part in the longer-term recovery from any major incident.

To support Elected Members, a briefing in relation to Emergency Planning was part of the induction programme. This broadly outlined the Council's arrangements to respond to a major or critical incident as well as spotlighting the specific expectations placed on Elected Members. In the event of any major incident, Elected Members could expect to receive relevant information and updates.

In a supplementary question Councillor Clarke thanked the Cabinet Member for his response, but confusingly her question was more around the Flood Wardens and if there was any opportunity just to offer support.

Councillor Alam welcomed any support and would take back the request and make contact with Councillor Clarke outside of the meeting.

(21) Councillor Currie asked could the Cabinet Member please tell him if the footfall in the Town Centre was recorded as a key performance indicator following events or interventions held in the centre?

Councillor Taylor, Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, confirmed the Council continuously monitored footfall across the town centre through footfall cameras. The cameras monitored footfall at specific fixed locations across the town. Daily footfall data could be produced including footfall counts on days when specific events or interventions took place.

Appraisal of town centre events typically also included a broader range of information, including data, interviews and feedback to appraise success alongside cost considerations.

In a supplementary question Councillor Currie asked whether there was any possibility of reintroducing certain events such as Rotherham By The Sea.

Councillor Taylor confirmed all things would be considered. From the information he had received he was encouraged that there was a constant uptrend in the footfall in the town centre and around the attendance of events, which were worthwhile and attractive to people.

(22) Councillor Sutton asked would the Cabinet Member join her to speak to residents about the proposed development which was bringing well deserved investment into Maltby and ensure the public consultation and feedback was taken seriously and the best value for money was ensured?

Councillor Sheppard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working, thanked Councillor Sutton for her question and offer, and confirmed a joint approach to speaking with local residents was welcomed. He was happy to agree to her request. The public consultation was a timely opportunity to gather the views of Maltby residents on the proposed High Street improvements. All feedback was valuable and would be considered to ensure that the scheme delivered on local priorities and, therefore, represented value for public money.

In a supplementary question Councillor Sutton pointed out there was a consultation booked in for tomorrow, so asked Councillor Sheppard if dates could be arranged to do further consultation?

Councillor Sheppard was aware the consultation was during the daytime so suggested there was a variation in time so more people could attend. He was more than happy to look at evenings in venues such as the library when it was open later in the evening.

(23) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's question referred to carers at Gateway expressing concerns over the support for their loved ones when they as carers passed away. He asked what conversations had taken place with care groups to develop support and policies for when such a sad occasion occurred?

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written answer to his question.

(24) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester's question referred to the issue of Beirut blocks in the Town Centre being raised before. Rather than concrete ones there were plastic variants around Minster Gardens. He asked was anybody thinking of an alternative that was not an eyesore.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester agreed to receive a written answer to his question.

70. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.