

COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, 15th September, 2010

Present:- The Mayor (Councillor McNeely) (in the Chair); Councillors Akhtar, Ali, Atkin, Barron, Blair, Buckley, Burton, Dodson, Doyle, Falvey, Fenoughty, Ellis, Gilding, Gosling, Goult, J. Hamilton, N. Hamilton, Havenhand, Hodgkiss, Hughes, Hussain, Jack, Kaye, Lakin, License, Littleboy, Mannion, Middleton, Nightingale, Parker, Pickering, Rushforth, G. A. Russell, P. A. Russell, R. S. Russell, St. John, Sangster, Sharman, Sims, Slade, Smith, Steele, Stone, Swift, Thirlwall, Turner, Tweed, Whelbourn, Whysall, Wootton, S. Wright and Wyatt.

A36 COMMUNICATIONS

The Chief Executive submitted apologies for absence from Councillors Austen, Currie, Cutts, Donaldson, Foden, License, Johnston, Kirk, Sharp and Walker.

A37 STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2010

Mr. M. Andrew, Chairman of the Standards Committee, introduced the Standards Committee Annual Report for 2010.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the Committee be thanked for their hard work.

Mover:- Councillor Stone
 Sharman

Seconder:- Councillor

A38 CABINET MINUTES

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet (Section C) (pages 30C to 36C) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Stone
 Sharman

Seconder:- Councillor

A39 DELEGATED POWERS MEETINGS

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings Cabinet Members as listed below be adopted:-

- Safeguarding and Developing Opportunities for Children (the former Children and Young People) – Pages 30D to 37D (Section D).
- Culture, Lifestyle, Sport and Tourism (the former Cultural

Services and Sport) – Pages 25F to 27F (Section F).

- Regeneration and Environment (the former Economic Development, Planning and Transportation) – Pages 28G to 35G (Section G).
- Adult Independence, Health and Well Being (the former Health and Social Care) – Pages 26H to 30H (Section H).
- Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods (the former Housing and Neighbourhoods) – Pages 23J to 32J (Section J).
- Town Centres (the former Streetpride)– Pages 4L to 6L (Section L).
- Regeneration and Environment and Town Centres (the former Economic Development, Planning and Transportation and Streetpride) – Page 12M (Section M).

Mover:- Councillor Stone
Sharman

Seconder:- Councillor

A40 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee (Section P) (pages 11P to 15P) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Sangster

Seconder:- Councillor Kaye

A41 LICENSING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Board (Section Q) (pages 7Q to 10Q) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Wootton

Seconder:- Councillor Barron

A42 PLANNING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Planning Board (Section T) (pages 65T to 98T) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Pickering

Seconder:- Councillor Dodson

A43 QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN

(1) Councillor Fenoughty asked why was there no disabled access to the public galleries and what would be the cost of making disabled

access to the public galleries possible?

Councillor Smith reported that disabled people were never discounted and the Council Chamber design was undertaken with consultation with the Access Officer. This was an existing building and, therefore, design was limited by the restrictions of the space available. The brief was to provide a Council Chamber with raised seating, which itself created a problem if disabled people were to be fully integrated. The ramps required for wheelchair users required a great deal of space which just was not available. The same applied to the Public Galleries which had to be raised even higher than the Chamber seating. The more steps there were, the longer the ramp had to be. The length of ramp required to cover this distance would have taken up the whole of the space and there would not have been any room for any seating, thus defeating the object. The only way ramps could have been included to the Public Galleries would have been to have eliminated the Committee Rooms at either side of the Chamber and utilised that space. Another option would have been to have installed lifts, but again this required a great deal of space and considerable expense. These difficulties were raised with the Access Officer who agreed that it would be the best compromise in the circumstances for wheelchair users to sit at the front of the Chamber.

(2) Councillor Gilding asked what were the anticipated costs of fitting out and furnishing the new Civic Offices at Main Street?

The Leader explained that as negotiations and commercial tendering activities for the fit out were still ongoing it was not currently appropriate to disclose any figures without putting the Council at a commercial disadvantage.

It was for this reason that the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment's report on the 13th September, 2010 was exempt.

(3) Councillor Thirlwall referred to advice from the Housing Finance Expert who claimed that it was no longer appropriate to contribute £410,000 per annum from the Housing Revenue Account to support the Area Assemblies and asked did the Cabinet Member believe now was the time to abandon Area Assemblies and use the money saved to protect frontline services?

Councillor Akhtar pointed out that this answer had already been provided to Councillor Thirlwall in advance of the meeting.

(4) Councillor Gilding asked the Cabinet Member to update Members on the situation at the Lincoln Street Workshops, Maltby.

Councillor Smith reported the lease to the Chamber expired on the 28th September, but the Council had offered to extend the period of occupation if the Chamber desired to do so in order to allow alternative premises to be sought by the Chamber for existing tenants. The Council's RIDO team were assisting in this process.

The latest information from the Chief Executive of the Chamber was that the main tenants have plans to leave the site by the end of September, but there were still some tenants who have not responded at all. It was the Chamber's hope that that the site would be vacated by end of October at the latest and not the end of November as was provisionally agreed with the Chamber.

(5) Councillor Thirlwall asked in view of the fact that there was virtually no work or responsibilities involved how could the Leader justify establishing the Cabinet position for Town Centres.

The Leader reported this year the Local Strategic Partnership had set out two key priorities, one of which was the town centre. Much progress had been made this year, despite a very difficult financial climate:-

- 28 new businesses opened in the town centre this year, with more to come.
- Despite removal of central Government funding there was a continuation of business vitality grant scheme and parking incentives (free after three until October, free on Saturday until the end of the calendar year).
- Consolidation of new operational management responsibilities under Town Centre Streetscene Manager and development of joint-working initiatives with South Yorkshire Police, PCSOs, Town Centre Wardens and SNT; daily joint briefings have now been established.
- Delivery of enhanced maintenance service standards based a Gold, Silver and Bronze approach, initially focused on the Council's own activities, but to be extended to include Utilities for example.
- New safer neighbourhood team created specifically for the town centre.
- Development of spending plans for delivering small-scale environmental improvements in key areas of the town centre

from the budget of £25,000 made available through the LAA reward grant.

- Over 7,000 residents and 96 businesses signed up to the shop local campaign.
- Ongoing regeneration projects, such as the railway station, Riverside House, community stadium, Minster Yard public realm, college re-development, on site and being delivered.
- A number of Townscape Heritage Initiative schemes on site on the High Street.

The community clearly see the town centre as a major asset and the delivery of the regeneration programme was likely to remain a Council priority in the future. It was, therefore, entirely appropriate to have a Cabinet Member focused on the town centres.

It was also worth noting that the role did not just include the Town Centre, but other centres initially Wath, Dinnington and Maltby covering the maintenance and improvement of Local Environmental Quality in all those areas. In addition, the role had responsibility for parking services and the Waste disposal PFI, which was a significant project covering Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster.

(6) Councillor Gilding asked why had it been necessary to provide a loan of £200,000 to 2010 Rotherham Ltd?

Councillor Akhtar replied that in line with work going on within the Council, 2010 Rotherham Ltd. was also seeking to deliver its services in the most cost efficient ways. The loan to 2010 Rotherham Ltd., would cover the diagnosis, design and implementation of systems and IT changes which would cost an estimated £200k. This was a one-off cost in 2010/ 11 which would deliver ongoing savings of approximately £650k year after year. Phase 1, (to be introduced this year) would deliver £450k, with an anticipation that phase 2 (to be delivered in 2011/ 12) would deliver an additional £200k.

This was an excellent initiative that the Cabinet Member full endorsed.

A44 QUESTIONS TO SPOKESPERSONS

(1) Councillor Gilding asked what were the current reserves of the

South Yorkshire Police Authority?

Councillor Littleboy reported that for a number of years the Police Authority had been building up its general reserves as a result of prudent financial management.

The minimum level of general reserves required to cover known financial risks was assessed to be 5.4% of budget or currently £14 million.

Currently the Authority held 8.8% of the 2010/ 11 budget likely to be £23 million at 31st March, 2010.

General reserves were required to provide for unforeseen expenditure, major operational contingencies and to provide adequate cover for financial risks within the budget assumptions. £9 million, therefore, was available as part of reserves strategy in support of the revenue budget over next few years as a means of spreading the impact of future spending cuts over a longer period.

The Police Authority held earmarked reserves that were set aside for future purposes and in most cases were committed. These totalled £22 million at 31st March, 2010. A further £9 million was set aside for future insurance liabilities that the Authority may have to meet.

Some of the Local Authority Members have expressed concern about the high level. However, since the banks gambled away their money and had to be bailed out by the taxpayer that had lead to the Coalition Government panicking and forecasting up to 30%/ 40% reductions in budgets - including the Police which they said they would protect. It was, therefore, not considered such a bad thing to have reserves that would help to protect the people in South Yorkshire from the proposed austerity.

(2) Councillor Gilding asked why had there been difficulties in recruiting officers?

Councillor Littleboy reported no problems in recruiting police officers.

During a recruitment drive typically 600 application packs would be issued in three days and this would typically fill the vacancies that existed. However, it was noted that South Yorkshire Police was currently slightly above its establishment figure and Rotherham had taken on nine additional probationers above its establishment, which was taking it in an overspend area and causing concern to the Commander.

The question was probably prompted by the problem that arose with workforce planning a little while ago when there were some relatively minor problems with workforce planning. The Human Resources Department set the recruiting plans largely on the basis of the requests from districts for new officers. That proved to be a little on the conservative side and additional recruitment was put in place.

The policing districts and departments consciously ran below establishment towards the end of the year as they knew that they had savings targets to meet for this year which were based on reducing the numbers of staff, including police officers. Those targets and savings could not be achieved if they started the year with a full establishment based on the previous year's budget. In simple terms if they did so they would start over spending this year's budget immediately and would not be able to reduce police officer numbers quickly enough to balance the books. It was also important to stress that some of the reduction in police officer numbers was linked to civilianisation of posts to make savings without reducing capacity.

A45 PARISH REVIEW

Consideration was given to the submitted report in respect of the Parish Review which detailed how following the making of final recommendations under the Review and subject to the consent of the Local Government Boundary Commission to change protected electoral arrangements in certain parishes, the Council would make an Order to bring the provisions of the Review into effect with various transitional provisions to be included in the Order as regards the proposed new Hellaby Parish Council.

Resolved:- (1) That the Strategic Director of Finance be authorised to determine the initial budget requirement in respect of the new Hellaby Parish Council.

(2) That the Ward Members for Hellaby represent the new parish from 1st April 2011, until the Councillors elected to the new parish council at the elections in May, 2011 come into office.

(3) That the Chief Executive be appointed Proper Officer for convening the Annual Meeting of the new Parish Council in 2011 and be responsible for the administration of the affairs of the new parish until a Proper Officer is appointed by the new parish council.

(4) That the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) be instructed to make and affix the Council's Common Seal

to an Order giving effect to the recommendations under the Review, and include the above provisions in the Order.

Mover:- Councillor Stone

Seconder:- Councillor Sharman

A46 ELECTION OF COUNCILLOR

The Returning Officer reported that the person indicated below had been elected Member of the Council at the election held on 5th August, 2010:-

Ward	Candidates	Votes
Sitwell	Judith Oliver Dalton	864
	Christopher Norman Middleton	1213 (Elected)
	Abdul Razaq	98
	David Ridgway	252
	John Wilkinson	241

A47 MEMBERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Resolved:- That the following appointments be made:-

- Councillor Middleton be appointed to the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel.
- Councillor Middleton be appointed to replace Councillor Hughes on the Standards Committee.
- Councillor Parker be appointed the Chairman of Wentworth Valley Area Assembly.

Mover:- Councillor Stone

Seconder:- Councillor Sharman