

**COUNCIL MEETING  
20th April, 2011**

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

**A99            PRESENTATION OF AWARDS**

The Mayor was pleased to present four awards to:-

- To the Ulley Dam and Country Park Restoration Team who were successful in winning an Excellence Award at the 56th I C E Awards event .
- To the Century Business Centre Team at Manvers who have recently won the Business Incubation Champion Winner 2011 - UK Business Incubation (UKBI).
- To individual members of the RBT Procurement Team who have recently gained Chartered Buyer status from the Chartered Institute of Purchase and Supply (CIPS).
- To Rotherham Ready team for winning the Enterprising Britain Award.

Congratulations were offered to all those involved in these achievements.

In addition, the Mayor also wanted to offer her own congratulations to the Town Centre Events Team on their organisation of Rotherham's own Royal Wedding, which had taken place in the All Saints' Square today.

**A100           COUNCIL MINUTES**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2011 be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover:- Councillor Stone

Seconder:- Councillor Sharman

**A101           COMMUNICATIONS**

[1] The Chief Executive submitted the following petitions which had been referred to the appropriate Directorate for consideration:-

- From one hundred and sixty-eight residents of the Norfolk Estate, Rotherham regarding unmindful car parking.
- From twenty-six residents of Chapel Walk, Rawmarsh re surfacing work at Chapel Walk, Rawmarsh.
- From eighteen residents of Todwick regarding access from the A57, turning right into Goosecarr Lane.

- From thirty-two residents of St. Ann's Road and Bramwell Street requesting resident only parking.
- From sixty-six residents of Kilnhurst objecting to the operation of Universal Recycling.

[2] The Chief Executive submitted apologies for absence from Councillors Blair, Gosling and License.

[3] The Chief Executive reported the receipt of Councillor Gavin Sharp's resignation with effect from 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2011.

## **A102 CABINET MINUTES**

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet (Section C) (pages 134C to 162C) be adopted, subject to the amendments below:-

A. Minute No. C203 (Role and Function of Overview and Scrutiny in Rotherham):-

be adopted with the addition of the following words:-

"that the new scrutiny arrangements be implemented at the Annual Council Meeting."

Mover:- Councillor Stone

Seconder:- Councillor Sharman

B. Minute No. C209 (Proposed Changes to the Planning Board):-

be adopted with the addition of the following words:-

"[4] That Cabinet Members be excluded from membership of the Planning Board."

Mover:- Councillor Littleboy

Seconder:- Councillor Sims

C. An amendment was proposed for Minute No. C204 (Recording of Council Meetings) to read:-

"That the cost of the filming of the digital recording of the full Council Meetings be investigated and a report be submitted to full Council for consideration."

Mover:- Councillor Mannion

Seconder:- Councillor Gilding

The amendment was put and LOST.

## **A103 DELEGATED POWERS MEETINGS**

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

- Safeguarding and Developing Learning Opportunities for Children – Pages 73D to 83D (Section D)

- Community Development, Equality and Young Peoples Issues – Pages 36E to 42E (Section E)
- Culture, Lifestyle, Sport and Tourism – Pages 41F to 44F (Section F)
- Regeneration and Environment – Pages 85G to 93G (Section G)
- Adult Independence Health and Well Being – Pages 64H to 75H (Section H)
- Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods – Pages 71J to 81J (Section J)
- Resources and Commissioning – Pages 40K to 46K (Section K)
- Town Centres– Pages 32L to 37L (Section L)
- Joint Meeting (Regeneration and Environment and Town Centres) – Pages 13M to 14M (Section M)
- Deputy Leader and Organisational Change and Governance – Pages 21N to 25N (Section N)

Mover:- Councillor Stone

Seconder:- Councillor Sharman

#### **A104 AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Audit Committee (Section P) (pages 34P to 43P) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Sangster

Seconder:- Councillor Kaye

#### **A105 LICENSING BOARD**

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Board (Section Q) (pages 23Q to 24Q) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Wootton

Seconder:- Councillor Barron

#### **A106 LICENSING COMMITTEE**

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee (Section R) (page 2R) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Wootton

Seconder:- Councillor Barron

#### **A107 PLANNING BOARD**

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Planning Board (Section T) (pages 241T to 260T) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Pickering

Seconder:- Councillor Dodson

**A108 QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS**

[1] Councillor Thirlwall asked could the Cabinet Member or Town Centres tell the Council Chamber who the Elected Member was that had been found to have illegally used a blue badge parking permit and had subsequently been let off prosecution on a technicality?

Councillor R. S. Russell reported the Council did not engage in speculation and rumour.

Notwithstanding that, Councillor Thirlwall was advised that the Council were not permitted under the Data Protection Act to release details of any person who was being or has been investigated. Only the Court could find someone guilty and once an individual was prosecuted then it was a matter of public record.

[2] Councillor Fenoughty asked what provision had this Council made, across the Borough, for gypsy and travellers' sites?

Councillor Akhtar explained that within Rotherham there were two Showmen/Over-wintering Sites and ten private owned gypsy and traveller sites.

Along with other authorities in the South Yorkshire area Rotherham commissioned a report which identified that it needed sixteen residential pitches. As a result the Authority undertook an extensive piece of work reviewing the potential of approximately 2,400 sites for their suitability for gypsy and traveller provision. A Cabinet report was submitted in July, 2009 sharing the locations of three preferred sites. On the back of this the Council decided to seek funding from the Homes and Community Agency prior to undertaking public consultation. The Homes and Community Agency decided that other areas in the region had a greater need for provision and turned down our funding bid. In the absence of funding the Council had not been able to progress provision.

The Council wote into the Housing Strategy, 2011-2014, (May 2010) a commitment to undertake a further study of need and the Council was signed up to taking a regional approach to this as part of the Sheffield City Region.

On Tuesday of this week, the Government announced a new consultation exercise 'Planning for Traveller Sites' which aimed to align planning policy for traveller sites more closely with other policies for Council housing and returning policy for gypsy and traveller issues to local authority discretion.

Finally, the Council (Local Planning Authority) was working to prepare an approved Development Plan Document which detailed Gypsy and Traveller site allocations and this would be complete in 2012.

[3] Councillor Gilding referred over the past two years to the Labour Party holding meetings on Council premises:-

Rotherham Labour Party – 22 occasions  
 Rother Valley Party – 10  
 Wentworth Party – 10  
 Labour candidates meetings – 3  
 Labour Conference briefings – 2

and asked had the Labour Party paid for these meetings and could details be provided of payment?

Councillor Sharman reported that prior to the refurbishment of the Town Hall political groups were charged a flat rate of £10.00 for each meeting. These were billed annually. However, during the period of refurbishment when meetings were relocated to Bailey House no charges were levied unless the meeting took place at the weekend. A number of political meetings took place at the weekend and the billing details for those were provided.

Since returning to the Town Hall the charging policy had been set so that all meetings held during the day did not incur any charge. In addition, any evening meetings held on those evenings when the Town Hall was normally open, i.e. Tuesday, Thursday or Friday do not incur a charge. Meetings held at weekends were billed. Billing details for those meetings were shown as:-

- 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2010 - Candidate Briefing – Party Sheet No. 05514 - £165.00
- 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2010 - Candidate Briefing – Party Sheet No. 05517 - £117.50
- 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2010 - Member Briefing – Party Sheet No. 05535 - £13.20
- 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 - Regional Labour Party Conference – Party Sheet No. 05785 - £340.00
- 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2010 - Candidates Briefing – Party Sheet No. 05786 - £419.50
- 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2011 - Labour Party Candidates – Party Sheet No. 05728 - £149.00

Question 4 fell as Councillor Mannion had left the meeting.

[5] Councillor Turner asked in what way was the latest railway station dysfunctional or inadequate and asked was the new station to improve the functionality or an exercise in aesthetics using more borrowed millions?

Councillor Smith pointed out that the redevelopment of the Rail Station and adjacent area was externally funded at no financial cost or risk to the Council. The original station had very limited facilities and was in a poor state of repair. Funding became available which had given the opportunity to modernise the station and adjacent area. The station area would be totally revitalized giving the visitors an improved impression of Rotherham when they arrived whilst offering better facilities and service.

Currently the station was not disability complaint so the refurbishment was welcome as was the extension of the platform which would enable longer trains to stop at Rotherham.

[6] Councillor Cutts asked was there further conflict of interest for a Labour Member to finance a Labour leaflet when simultaneously the Council were funding his organisation?

Councillor Sharman confirmed that he was not sure he fully understood the question. He saw no conflict of interest if a member of a political party paid for a leaflet from that party. The Council did not fund political parties.

[7] Councillor Thirlwall asked did the Leader believe that someone who has contracts with the Council and who was a personal friend of the Leader should be a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel or at the very least declare these interests?

The Leader reported that the Independent Remuneration Panel comprised representatives of partner organisations within the town. It was likely that members of the Panel would know some Members of the Council. It would always be a matter of judgment for a Panel Member whether he or she regarded a particular relationship as so close as to require a declaration.

Question 8 fell as Councillor Mannion had left the meeting.

[9] Councillor Turner asked why did the Labour Moguls decide to rip up the tramlines across South Yorkshire?

Councillor Smith explained that the tram network in South Yorkshire was in decline up to October, 1960 when the last tram service in South Yorkshire ceased operating. To retain an obsolete tram network across South Yorkshire would make neither practical nor financial sense, the maintenance liability for zero benefit, or indeed disbenefit if the hazards of unused tramlines were considered and could not be justified. When the construction of new Sheffield Supertram commenced the track and overhead wire specifications had to be designed and built to current standards which were completely different to the 'old' network.

[10] Councillor Cutts referred to the cost of the construction of Riverside House and, despite other requests for months, asked for the cost to furnish and provide IT equipment and whether this stalling would last until after the Elections?

Councillor Smith disagreed with Councillor Cuts' assertions that a response had been stalled. Advice had been provided on the timescale that the information would be made available, once a number of the contracts had been finalised.

[11] Councillor Thirlwall asked if, as was constantly being told, the Area Assemblies were the link between the community and the Council then why had there been no community representatives on the Wentworth Valley Area Assembly for the major part of that area in the last two to three years?

Councillor Akhtar reported the Area Assemblies were public meetings open to anyone in the local community and no one had been prevented from attending them in the Wentworth Valley Area.

Question 12 fell as Councillor Mannion had left the meeting.

[13] Councillor Turner asked would the new multimillion pound tram initiative encourage more people to go to Sheffield or more people to go to Rotherham from Sheffield?

Councillor Smith reported that whilst the joint economies of Rotherham and Sheffield were undisputed, commuters between Rotherham and Sheffield (and vice-versa) have to contend with roads that are congested and public transport links that are at or over capacity and not as attractive as they should be.

Within Sheffield City Region, the strongest relationship in travel between districts was between Rotherham and Sheffield, with over 33,000 movements each day. Approximately 10,000 trips originated in Sheffield and 23,000 trips originated in Rotherham.

Whilst not all of these trips were between the two centres, by virtue of the commuter levels it could be argued that more residents in Rotherham were likely to take advantage of, and benefit from, the improved Public Transport link that the Tram-Train would provide in their daily commute. However, the opportunity of Tram-Train would also create trips between the two districts and it was expected that more people would travel to Rotherham.

Questions 14 to 19 remained unanswered after the thirty minute guillotine and the answers would be provided for all Members in writing.

## **A109      SCRUTINY UPDATE**

Councillor Whelbourn, Chairman of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee, welcomed the opportunity to update activities by Scrutiny over the past few months and pointed out that the review of the future of overview and scrutiny had come to an end resulting in endorsement of the recommendations by Cabinet on the 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2011 and a referral to full Council for decision.

Over the past few months the Scrutiny Panels had also considered work relating to:-

- Assistive technology.
- Services associated with dealing with and preventing diabetes.
- Impact of severe weather and how the Council with partners managed the challenges.
- Examination on ways to improve dealing with consultations, especially those from Central Government.

The work that scrutiny did added value and plans were in hand for the work programme for the coming year, whilst being flexible and responsive to change.

Looking into next year the possibility of implementing new ways of working alongside further legislative changes remained a challenge, combined with a tough financial climate and the opportunities offered by health, police and local government reform.

Resolved:- That the update on the work of Scrutiny be noted.

#### **A110 VOTE OF THANKS**

The Mayor referred to Councillors Austen, Littleboy, Sharp, Slade, St. John and Thirlwall who were not standing in the forthcoming election and thanked them, on behalf of the Council, for the work they had undertaken during their terms of office.

Best wishes were also offered to those standing in the forthcoming election.