

**COUNCIL MEETING
16th September, 2015**

Present:- The Mayor (Councillor Maggi Clark) (in the Chair); Councillors Ahmed, Alam, Astbury, Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Buckley, Burton, Cowles, Elliot, Ellis, Evans, Fleming, Godfrey, Hoddinott, Hughes, Hunter, Jepson, Jones, Lelliott, Mallinder, McNeely, Middleton, Parker, Pickering, Price, Read, Reeder, Reynolds, Roche, Roddison, Rose, Rosling, Rushforth, Russell, Sansome, Sims, Smith, Steele, Taylor, John Turner, Julie Turner, C. Vines, Wallis, Watson, Whelbourn, Whysall and Yasseen.

43. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported on various events where she had represented the Council since the last meeting. Most memorable were the unveiling of the memorial to those who lost their lives in the Maltby Pit Disaster in 1923, the visit to the monthly Alzheimer's memory café held at Silverwood Miners Welfare, raft building with the young people doing the National Citizenship Awards with Rotherham United Community Trust, the National Amateur Swimming Association Open Water Championships at Rother Valley Country Park, the Special Olympics Equestrian Event at Aston and welcoming the Rugby World Cup to Rotherham.

For the first time this year the Mayor has their own cadets and it was a huge honour to welcome Lance Corporal Emma Harris from the Girls Venture Corps Air Cadets, Cadet Flight Sergeant Eleanor Dovey from 218 Rotherham Squadron Royal Air Force Cadets and Leading Cadet Isabel Smelt of Rotherham Sea Cadets and to award them their badges and certificates earlier this month.

The Mayor had also opened two businesses in the town centre; one - Wed2B, a brand new bridal shop based in the Old Market gallery, creating ten new jobs; the second, Andrews Butchers, an established business which had relocated to Effingham Street.

The Mayor also attended Rotherham Show and had the pleasure of welcoming the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff of South Yorkshire. Attendance on Saturday was lower than previous years, but Sunday was very popular.

Along with many Councillors the Mayor had the honour of attending the Dedication of the World War II Memorial in Clifton Park.

Sadly not all news in Rotherham was good and it was with sadness the Mayor had heard of the death of Mr. Mushin Ahmed, who died recently following a brutal and unprovoked assault and also the death of Rotherham born racing driver Justin Wilson who was struck by flying debris during an Indy Car race.

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Managing Director submitted apologies for absence from Councillors Ali, Currie, Cutts, Finnie, Gosling, Hague, Hamilton, Johnston, Khan, Robinson, Tweed, M. Vines and Wyatt.

45. PETITIONS

The Managing Director submitted the following petitions which had been referred to the appropriate Directorates for consideration:-

- Containing 54 signatures asking the Council to improve and effectively manage Anston Plantation to the rear of properties on Edinburgh Drive, Wellington Avenue and Netherthorpe Way, North Anston.
- Containing 32 signatures raising general concerns about anti-social behaviour in the Lister Avenue, Rawmarsh area.
- Containing 98 signatures asking the Council to appoint a lollypop person outside East Dene Primary School.

46. COMMUNICATIONS

No communications had been received.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

48. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 8th July, 2015, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

49. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(1) Mr. J. Martin asked that, in view of the content of the 343+ representations lodged with the Council last November via refs 528645 and 775490, please confirm that site LDF0237 has been dropped from the final version of the Sites and Policies document accordingly?

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, explained that a report on the Local Plan Sites and Policies document was being considered by this meeting under Item 13 on the agenda.

COUNCIL MEETING - 16/09/15

If the Council approved public consultation on the document, it would be released on 28th September, 2015. At this time all interested parties could make their comments on the document and with this in mind it would be premature to confirm the content or otherwise at this stage.

In a supplementary response Mr. Martin pointed out that the question had not been answered. If the plan was approved the Council had turned its back on the will of the community, were ignoring the community plan and were not supporting the people they represented and were elected by. Mr. Martin's conclusion was that the Council were either incompetent or in a conspiracy.

(2) Mrs. C. Peters stated that Rotherham's young people, were a credit with:-

- 67.1% GCSE grades A*-C
- A level results exceeding national average

and asked what strenuous, ambitious, urgent efforts was RMBC making to attract high skilled, well paid, 21st Century jobs in IT, Communications, Finance, Insurance, Scientific, Technical, Professional sectors where we lagged woefully behind the national average?

The Leader acknowledged the young people and their results were a credit to the Borough. The Council needed to do more to bring higher value jobs into Rotherham and referred to the work taking place at Dinnington Incubation Centre, with the Sheffield City Region and the growth projections.

The Council were partnering with Sheffield Council and the University of Sheffield to develop a new Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District that would build on the success of the developments at Rotherham's Advanced Manufacturing Park, with success in attracting highly skilled and highly paid jobs with excellent training opportunities for young people.

The Rotherham Economic Growth Plan was also due to be considered at the next Council meeting.

In a supplementary question Mrs. Peters welcomed the efforts, but asked why contact was not being made with the large scale manufacturing industries to adopt Rotherham and this should be moved forward.

The Leader agreed with Mrs. Peters' sentiments and pointed out the industries already attracted to Rotherham at the Advanced Manufacturing Park and the developments taking place at Waverley.

(3) Mr. M. Eyre referred to the one thing being mentioned in the reports into Rotherham was poor standards and the resulting failures of the Council partly due to there being a lack of real opposition and asked did the Leader hope after next year's full Council elections there would be real opposition or a one party state?

The Leader explained he was unable to prejudge the election as the public would decide. He hoped they would make the right decision when they voted.

In a supplementary question Mr. Eyre referred to the previous results and in the spirit of scrutiny and representation asked that parties not field three candidates in some Wards.

The Leader pointed out that this would be a spirited campaign with all parties choosing to field their own candidates.

(4) Mr. B. Cutts referred to the Magna Trust and how in:-

2010 lost £1,990,059

2011 lost £2,005,146

2012 lost £1,207,910

2013 lost £1,256,593

2014 lost £1,261,156

and in total in five years had lost £7,720,864 and asked what would it be this year?

The Leader stated that the trading performance of the Magna Trust was a question that needed to be directed to the Trust itself and its Board of Trustees.

In a supplementary question Mr. Cutts asked what the likely 2015 loss was to be. If the Council did not know then it was time it did.

The Leader again confirmed that he was not party to this information and Mr. Cutts would be better contacting the Magna Managing Director.

(5) Mr. P. Thirlwall asked could the appropriate Member tell him if they were prepared to recommend to the Commissioners that the Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy money received from the Lidget Lane housing site and the new Aldi should be used to return the ill-conceived Bramley one way traffic system back to two way?

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, replied that the Section 106 contributions or planning obligations were only required to mitigate the impact of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms. When Section 106 contribution was asked for it had to relate to the development that had been submitted and must meet the national tests of being necessary,

directly related to the development and be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Section 106 money could not, therefore, be used in the manner suggested.

The Council did not currently have an adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in place. Following adoption the Council could set a date to commence charging. The future use of Community Infrastructure Levy money was at the Council's discretion, but a draft list set out infrastructure priorities for Community Infrastructure Levy. This covered things like junction improvements, school provision and health facilities that would be required to support the growth planned by the Local Plan. It would not be appropriate to use Community Infrastructure Levy money for the purpose suggested.

In a supplementary question Mr. Thirlwall referred to the decision taken at the time by the former Cabinet Member, which was contrary to that proposed by officers and not supported by Ward Councillors and officers of the Area Assembly. He asked if consideration could be given to reversing the scheme back to two way operation.

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, was unable to comment on the previous decision not being a Councillor at the time, but confirmed she would take further advice from officers.

(6) Mr. A. Osborne asked why was South Yorkshire Police covering up crime as well as Social Services cases of up the 1,400 or so people in Rotherham who have been attacked by others?

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, thanked Mr. Osborne for his question. The Council did not run the Police Force, but it did have a statutory duty to work alongside the Police and Crime Commissioner and his officers to ensure children were protected. The Leader and Deputy Leader had placed on record acknowledgement of the Council's past failings and with the Leader apologised on behalf of the Council for the children who have suffered from such horrific abuse, at the hands of, what could only be described as evil criminals.

However, as some of the victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation have recently confirmed publicly, things have changed. Learning from the past and today the Council was working determinedly with South Yorkshire Police to ensure that perpetrators of these awful crimes were brought to justice and to ensure that any victim that came forward was fully supported to tell their story. The Council would continue to appeal to anyone who had suffered to come forward and assured them the Council would listen and respond.

Children's Services have been entirely remodelled to make sure that victims could have absolute confidence in the support they would receive, the multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation Service, 'Evolve', had been rebuilt and additional Social Workers have been recruited, trained and developed to ensure children received the very best support.

'Operation Clover' - a partnership between Rotherham Council and South Yorkshire Police - had seen over 100 charges brought to date and a dedicated victim support team had been put in place as part of that operation, with Social Workers seconded to work alongside the Police to provide each victim with an individual support plan.

The work had not been limited to Children's Services. The Council's Fresh Start Strategy signalled the ambition in becoming a truly child-centred Borough. The new policy had been informed by the views of victims and survivors and once fully implemented would be one of the most robust regimes in the country, offering better protection to vulnerable children.

The views of victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation would continue to be listened to. This included research into the kinds of support needed in the long term, and also the creation of a multi-agency Survivors' Board which contributed to the work of the Council and partners. So far over £500k had been invested into support services for victims and survivors – with £262k more invested in the voluntary sector by the Government. Further, the Council had put together a funding package of £3.1m in partnership with KPMG Foundation, the Government and leading children's charity Barnardo's to help prevent young people from becoming a victim of child sexual exploitation in the first place.

In a supplementary question Mr. Osborne asked why some calls to the Police were not taken seriously, especially given the disturbance following the demonstrations in the town centre and the reported incidents on Wellgate.

The Deputy Leader confirmed that any reasonable citizen would report any concerns to the Police. However, if Mr. Osborne had any further details that would help the Police with their enquiries he should be forwarding information on.

50. REVIEW OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE STATUS

Consideration was given to a report detailing the decision of the Commissioners in May, 2015, to pay 50% of the Special Responsibility Allowance in respect of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Advisory Cabinet Members.

The report also set out that, following a review of the Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Licensing Board, Commissioner Ney had recommended that 50% of the Allowance be paid as from 1st September, 2015, in relation to the serious issues surrounding the licensing function of the Authority.

Resolved:- (1) That the decision of the Commissioners in May, 2015, to pay 50% of the Special Responsibility Allowance in respect of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Advisory Cabinet Members be noted.

(2) That the decision of the Commissioners in relation to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Licensing Board, to take effect from 1st September, 2015, be noted.

51. APPOINTMENT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER

Consideration was given to a report advising of the requirement to ensure that continuing appointments for a Returning Officer for elections and a Registration Officer and Deputy Registration Officer for electoral registrations were in place.

Resolved:- (1) That with effect from 16th September, 2015, the following appointments be approved:-

(a) Stuart Fletcher, Service Manager (Legal and Democratic Services) as Returning Officer for Local Government elections;

(b) Stuart Fletcher as Registration Officer and the appointment of Neil Concannon, also a Service Manager (Legal and Democratic Services) as Deputy Registration Officer.

(2) That the temporary amendment to the Council's Scheme of Delegation be approved to enable Stuart Fletcher to undertake the "Proper Officer Provisions" described in the report submitted.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

52. LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS - IMPLEMENTATION OF SENIOR OFFICER STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS

Further to Minute No. 16 of the meeting of the Council held on 3rd June, 2015, consideration was given to a report which brought forward some minor changes to the structural proposals and specific recommendations in respect of flexibility in the salary level for the post of the newly titled Strategic Director of Adult Care and Housing.

Councillor Read, the Leader, responded to the various questions about the rationale for the potential increase in salary depending on the expertise of a candidate and confirmed that when looking at comparative salaries of posts in other Councils it was appropriate to at least offer the potential to appoint the most suitable candidate on up to £120,000 if deemed necessary, rather than waste time with a process which might not be productive, given the importance of the post.

With regards to the benchmarking of Metropolitan Borough Councils who had advertised the equivalent role over the last few months, the Leader confirmed there to be no conspiracy when it was pointed out that the comparisons were all Labour controlled authorities. He explained that the comparison related to similar sized northern metropolitan authorities, not to the authorities political control.

Resolved:- That the post of Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing and Housing agreed in June 2015 be re-titled Strategic Director of Adult Care and Housing and that the potential to offer a salary from £113,384 (its current level) up to £120,000 be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

53. ROTHERHAM TOGETHER - LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FUTURE GOVERNANCE MODEL

Consideration was given to a report outlining the proposal for the future of Rotherham's Local Strategic Partnership, including its purpose and structures.

Clarification was sought on the costs associated with the "Rotherham Together" branding, need for a clear strategy to ensure the organisation did not fail, being more open and transparent with the membership allowing for wider representation to other Councillors, membership duplication on the two groups and the reason for some Councillors being included and auditing of the organisation given the comments from the Corporate Governance Inspection.

Resolved:- (1) That the proposals for a renewed Local Strategic Partnership, proposed to be named "Rotherham Together" be approved.

(2) That the proposed terms of reference and membership for the Rotherham Together Partnership and the supporting operational Chief Executive Officer Group be approved.

(3) That further reports be received, as appropriate, for approval of supporting strategic board/partnership governance arrangements and strategic priorities.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

54. SHEFFIELD CITY REGION ECONOMIC DEVOLUTION DEAL PROPOSAL

Consideration was given to a report which detailed how on 4th September, 2015 the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership had submitted to Government proposals for an economic devolution deal, in line with the deadline for such proposals set by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Summer Budget announcements in July 2015.

The focus of the Sheffield City Region proposal was on accelerating and enhancing the delivery of the 10-year “Strategic Economic Plan” for the City region, already agreed with Government, which aimed to deliver 70,000 new jobs and 6,000 new businesses.

Following submission of this proposal document to Government, discussion and negotiation would continue, led by the Sheffield City Region on behalf of all nine of its member local authorities, prior to final sign off of devolution deals before the comprehensive spending review conclusions which were expected on 25th November, 2015.

Reference was made to the Government’s statements that new, directly elected “Metro Mayors” were seen by Ministers as a pre-requisite for any further devolution. Council Leaders across the City Region have clearly been aware of this viewpoint throughout their discussions. However, the first preference set out in the Sheffield City Region proposal was for current democratic structures in local authorities and the existing Combined Authority to deliver on the deal, without the need for an elected, City Region-wide Mayor.

Questions were raised by a number of Elected Members about the directly elected “Metro Mayors” being a given to devolution, the short time frame for sharing information, building on the development of an strategic infrastructure plan where planning permission was refused by a constituent local authority or was granted contrary to the City Region strategic infrastructure plan, for there to be a power of call-in to review the decision and the need to ensure the devolution was not just another layer of bureaucracy, but about the creation of employment for local people using local resources.

On a positive note the devolution deal could be a good thing for Rotherham and would keep decision making local by locally elected politicians as long as the budget was sustainable. This was a real opportunity to control the region’s own destiny and maintain control locally rather than decisions and directions coming from Whitehall.

In terms of the elected “Metro Mayor” governance the Sheffield City Region proposals were clear on a preferred model which was delivered through existing democratic structures.

Members were supportive of the proposal if this was of benefit to Rotherham, but remained cautious about the powers afforded to “Metro Mayors”.

Councillor Read, the Leader, responded to the concerns and questions raised and confirmed further discussion would take place before any final decision was made.

Resolved:- That the Sheffield City Region economic devolution deal proposals be noted.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

55. ROTHERHAM LOCAL PLAN - PUBLICATION OF THE SITES AND POLICIES

Consideration was given to a report which sought approval for statutory public consultation on the Sites and Policies document which would take place during Autumn 2015 focusing on issues of soundness and legal compliance.

The document would then be submitted to Government for independent examination, subject to there being no significant changes required following consultation.

The plan met all the identified challenges in a sustainable way and met the local housing target whilst minimising the loss of Green Belt.

The plan promoted the right development, in the right place, at the right time and also supported the Rotherham Growth Plan and the Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan.

Councillors Cowles Jepson, Parker John Turner and C. Vines were unable to offer their support to the proposal objecting to the loss of the green belt in certain areas, increased traffic generation along the A631 highway network, regeneration of the town centre, traffic congestion and believed little regard was being taken of the public's concerns.

Councillor Jepson also sought clarification on whether or not the public had to make representations at the next consultation stage in order to have an opportunity at the inspection stage. This would be responded to in writing.

Resolved:- (1) That public consultation on the Sites and Policies document for the statutory six week period be approved.

(2) That submission of the Sites and Policies document to Government, subject to no significant changes being required following public consultation be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Lelliott

Seconder:- Councillor Atkin

56. NOTICE OF MOTION - ORGREAVE

Moved by Councillor Wallis and seconded by Councillor Watson.

This Council:-

- a. Notes with considerable concern the IPCC decision not to investigate the policing of Orgreave, despite the scoping exercise having found evidence that police officers used excessive force, committed perjury and perverted the course of justice.
- b. Does not accept the IPCC rationale that the passage of time mitigates against a full investigation.
- c. Notes that the remit of the IPCC scoping exercise did not extend to cover political context that both empowered the police and facilitated their actions and the misconduct thus far identified.
- d. Believes that only a full, independent, public inquiry will have the capacity to reveal the whole truth about the policing of Orgreave; and enable the injustices committed there to be acknowledged and addressed.
- e. Supports the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign in its aim of securing a full, independent, public inquiry into the policing at Orgreave during the 1984-85 Miners' Strike.
- f. Calls upon South Yorkshire Police to apologise to the mining communities for the misconduct that has already been identified by the IPCC scoping exercise.
- g. Calls on the government to support, and fund, a full, independent, public inquiry into the policing of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike.

The motion was put and debated and adopted by the Council.

57. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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

Councillor Jepson suggested that as part of the review of the Standards Committee consideration be given to abolishing the current arrangement and making it a totally independent body.

Councillor Beck, Chairman of the Standards Committee, confirmed that the Working Group, made up of independent and opposition members, were looking at the membership as part of the review.

Mover:- Councillor Beck

Seconder:- Councillor Hughes

58. AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

Councillor Parker referred to Minute No. C5 (Internal Audit Progress Report) and the indication that there were five areas that had been concluded as “inadequate” following audit work – one of which was taxi licensing. He asked if there were any ongoing investigations in this Council at the moment as far as fraud or any other irregularities were concerned and would like confirmation whether there was or was not.

To assist Councillor Ellis confirmed that the audit findings of taxi licensing had been acknowledged and of the fourteen recommendations accepted, ten had already been addressed and four remained ongoing, but it was anticipated these would be resolved by the end of October.

Councillor Hughes, Vice-Chairman of the Audit Committee, agreed to send Councillor Parker a response to his question in writing.

Mover:- Councillor Hughes

Seconder:- Councillor Alam

59. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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

Reference was made to Minute No. 10 (Health Select Commission Update) by Councillor Middleton, Deputy Mayor, and the importance of raising public awareness about the impact of not cancelling unneeded appointments with G.P.'s and the various methods that could be used.

The Chairmen of the Health Select Commission, Councillor Sansome, and Health and Wellbeing Board, Councillor Roche, shared the same concerns about missed appointments, but confirmed this was to be taken forward with the C.C.G.

Mover:- Councillor Roche

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

60. PLANNING BOARD

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

Mover:- Councillor Atkin

Seconder:- Councillor Pickering

61. SENIOR OFFICERS INDEPENDENT DISCIPLINARY PANEL

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Senior Officers Independent Disciplinary Panel be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Beck

Seconder:- Councillor Hughes

62. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

No questions had been received.

63. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO ADVISORY CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN

(1) Councillor C. Vines referred to Look North on 26th August, 2015, which again confirmed from the Jay Report that Councillors at the seminar could not say they were unaware of the scale of child sexual exploitation. When would the Leader stop putting his head in the sand, show some leadership and rid the Council of these people who failed instead of promoting them?

The Leader explained the Council was working hard to make the changes to move the Borough forward. An opposition Member had also been present at the seminar. The absence of questions relating to child sexual exploitation, Children's Services, Adult Services and the improvement plan were also noted.

In a supplementary question Councillor C. Vines again referred to the attendance of certain Councillors at the seminar as identified in the Jay Report. This town could not move forward when people were being placed into positions, making it unfit for purpose. What this town needed was a complete clear out to be able to start again.

The Leader again reiterated his commitment to making the changes required for Rotherham. The public would decide on the right people to take the town forward next year and until that time the Leader would continue with the job he had been asked to do.

(2) Councillor C. Vines asked could the Leader please tell him what benefit to Rotherham did the following visits by Labour Councillors past and present bring and were there reports to cover the visits of Councillors Foden, Rushforth, and Stone, together with a guest each and an officer to St. Quentin Xmas Market in December, 2013.

The Leader explained there were no longer foreign trips for Councillors, but explained the annual civic visit to St. Quentin was part of the Town Twinning Agreement to maintain permanent links between the two towns, the aim being to promote exchanges between residents of the two towns and to develop a greater understanding of one another's culture.

An example of one of the benefits of the twinning link was a project which came to fruition in the following year (2014) involving students and lecturers from Rotherham College of Arts and Technology funded by the European Comenius programme. This was to be part of a multi-cultural project where colleges from Italy, Romania, Greece, Turkey and France came together to work on a project around fashion from designing the clothes, the ultimate aim to show their designs during a cat walk show in St. Quentin.

(3) Councillor C. Vines referred to his previous question and asked the Leader to explain the purpose and benefit to Rotherham tax payers for the following visits in March, 2013 for Councillor Hussain and Karl Battersby to Strasbourg for Roma inclusion and Councillor Dodson and Paul Woodcock to Poland to calibrate City Rights.

The Leader explained that the visit to Strasbourg on the 20th March, 2013, was to represent the Council at the Council of Europe's Alliance for Roma Inclusion launch. The launch was an opportunity to share experience and best practice, and be part of the European programme for Roma inclusion. The Council were invited to attend, because at the time Rotherham were leading on Eastern European and Roma challenges at the Yorkshire and Humber Regional level. This led in part to Rotherham's involvement as a delivery partner in the EU the Roma matrix project.

Rotherham has a partnership agreement with Zabrze in Poland, based around working together on projects focussing on information sharing, cultural, education and the economy. This visit took place from the 27th to 30th September, 2013, and was to a City Rights event in Zabrze to maintain links with our partner town and with existing partners in Europe, in the event that funding for mutually beneficial projects becomes available, as well as maintaining cultural links. Former Councillor Dodson was Deputy Mayor at the time of the visit.

In a supplementary question Councillor C. Vines asked what benefit there was to Rotherham for these people visiting to discuss Roma inclusion.

The Leader explained this visit was to look at the Roma Matrix Project, which was delivered with funding from the EU Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme.

(4) Councillor C. Vines again referred to Question 3, referring to Councillor Akhtar and Tim O'Connell attending Marseille for the Roma Conference in October, 2013 and asked what was the benefit to the Rotherham tax payers of all these visits and was there any visit reports to justify these visits.

The Leader confirmed there was no written report to Council on the outcome of this conference, but again reiterated overseas travel was no longer taking place.

In a supplementary question Councillor C. Vines was aware visits no longer took place, but asked would there be a further fact finding tour now there may be an expectation to accept refugees from Syria.

The Leader had nothing further to add.

(5) Councillor Price asked did the Leader agree with him that in a time where South Yorkshire Police faced up to 1500 staff cuts and the local economy was struggling; more should be done to prevent fascist groups repeatedly coming to Rotherham to hijack the town's recovery with their politics of division.

The Leader confirmed he did agree with Councillor Price and was working closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable from South Yorkshire Police and had met with them last week. This was at a time when the Police were losing resources and making redundant 20% of the Police Community Support Officers.

(6) Councillor Beck asked, given the recent submission of the Sheffield City Region Devolution Deal to Government and welcomed focus on the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District within it, would the Leader support bringing Sheffield City Region Combined Authority meeting minutes as an agenda item for future Council meetings in order to strengthen communication between the Combined Authority and the Council as a whole?

The Leader stated that the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority was a public meeting, and the minutes were posted on the Sheffield City Region website. However, as this was not a meeting of the Council they should not be included on the agenda, but consideration would be given as to how Members could gain access to these minutes.

(7) Councillor Beck referred to Rother Valley Country Park being one of Rotherham's most visited outdoor recreational and leisure facilities and asked could he have an update on any recent and planned developments at the Park.

Councillor Roche, Advisory Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, replied that over the past year there have been several significant additions to the range and quality of customer facilities at Rother Valley Country Park. A new cycle hire centre had been opened, equipped with an increased variety of cycles catering for people of all abilities, and groups of different sizes. There was also a new classroom providing high quality accommodation for school groups, meetings and corporate hire. Improvements to the café were providing a higher quality service to customers. Following the reopening of the miniature railway, a second station had been built to serve the newly opened Animal Petting Farm at no cost to the Council. These were all proving to be very popular with customers and the resulting additional income was helping to reduce the net cost to the Council of running the park.

The proposed development of the Gulliver's children's theme park on the adjacent Pithouse West site, as referred to in Question 20, would be complementary and further enhance the park. Consideration was also being given to expansion of the existing café business to increase income and to further reinforce the park's reputation as one of the region's top visitor destinations.

In a supplementary question Councillor Beck asked given the developments at Rother Valley, what other developments had taken place at other parks such as Thrybergh.

Councillor Roche, Advisory Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, replied that developments at the other parks included an ice cream parlour, crazy golf and at Thrybergh the opening of a new tooty fruity soft play area with ice cream parlour.

(8) This question from Councillor Currie asking on average per year, over the last five years, had the revenue from taxi licensing created, and where had this revenue been used would be responded to in writing as he was unable to be present.

(9) This question from Councillor Currie indicating the Prime Minister has given a 5 year pledge to take Syrian refugees in to Britain under the current UN scheme, where will Rotherham be in this allocation would be responded to in writing as he was unable to be present.

(10) Councillor Reynolds asked who decided that the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Magna report was needed and agreed how much the report would cost.

The Leader explained that the meeting of the Former Cabinet on the 4th February 2015 resolved 'That the appointment of an independent consultant to undertake a review of Magna's business, to help to strengthen the Magna business plan and to assess the future viability of Magna, be approved and a report be submitted back to the Cabinet in due course.'

COUNCIL MEETING - 16/09/15

In response to this approved recommendation the Council undertook a formal tender process, which resulted in the award of the contract to PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds asked how much the report had cost.

The Leader confirmed the report was not yet complete. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) had submitted a fixed cost for the report of £12,850. The Council had decided not to proceed with any further work on this.

(11) Councillor Reynolds asked when would the report from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) be delivered on Magna's viability as a business and who would the report be sent to.

The Leader explained that PwC were in the process of finalising their report on the Magna business plan for review by the Council. It will be delivered to the Acting Strategic Director of Resources by the end of September 2015. It would come into the public domain as part of the decision making process for the Commissioners.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds was aware the report had been delayed by some four to six weeks and asked if there were any penalty clauses written into the contract with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) given that it had not been delivered on time.

The Leader explained the delay was not due to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), but due to the staff being unavailable at Magna.

(12) Councillor Reynolds asked who would evaluate the Magna report and decide on the actions to take in the light of the report findings.

The Leader confirmed a report would be prepared by officers on the findings of the PwC review, which would be considered jointly by the Managing Director Commissioner and Commissioner Julie Kenny at a joint decision-making meeting.

Following consideration of the report, the Commissioners would issue a "Minded to Grant Decision", where upon the Commissioner would take representations for a period of five working days before issuing a Final Decision.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds asked why the public could not decide on the future of Magna with it losing money year on year.

The Leader pointed out the public could make representations on the "Minded to Decision" once it was published.

(13) Councillor Fleming referred to the Council managed residential homes for older people and asked how many units were provided for dementia residential care.

Councillor Roche, Advisory Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, advised that there were two Local Authority managed care homes for older people, Lord Hardy Court and Davies Court. Both these care homes provided residential care and Intermediate care. Each home had sixty beds, thirty of the sixty beds were for specialist dementia care.

In a supplementary question Councillor Fleming referred to the costs associated with dementia care of which there were 1,688 people on the G.P. register. By 2025 the number of people in Rotherham with dementia could have increased to 4,400 and he asked was there any forward planning taking place to ensure this could be managed.

Councillor Roche, Advisory Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, advised attempts were being made to address this problem in care homes with only 87% of dementia care occupied. However, because of the ageing population a review would take place over the next few months to ensure the plan for the future was sustainable.

(14) Councillor Cowles pointed out that with the anniversary of the Jay report and last year's accounts about to be published would the Leader provide the Council Members with an update on the additional total costs to-date incurred to cover the child sexual exploitation scandal.

The Leader said that a Transformation reserve of £8.4m was set aside to cover one off costs arising from the Jay Report. At the moment the additional cost amounted to approximately £5.5m of which approximately £365,000 had been spent on post abuse support.

The costs associated with legal services and partner agencies were not yet known. However, the Leader had asked Ian Thomas, Strategic Director, to make enquiries on Councillor Cowles' behalf. Once he had the information he would get back to Councillor Cowles in writing.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles referred to many of the children involved being in public care and as education was important to him he had requested educational outcomes. Compared to the national average the Rotherham's outcomes for children in care figures were low. What was needed was the employment of an Educational Psychologist and whilst the cost to the authority would be in the region of £100,000, this would improve the performance of the children.

It was not all doom and gloom though as it had been reported that one child in care had been accepted into university and this Council's congratulations should be forwarded and any additional support offered.

COUNCIL MEETING - 16/09/15

The Leader was unable to give a commitment to the appointment of an Educational Psychologist, but would indeed make enquiries. Clearly the Council wished to move in the right direction and congratulations were offered to the young person who had secured a place in higher education.

(15) Councillor Cowles referred to a recent short conversation where the Leader agreed with him that Area Assembly meetings were not very effective and asked how long had he felt this to be the case.

The Leader explained this was a matter of opinion and had thought this for a while.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles asked why had the Leader not done anything if he felt like this. People were being paid to run these meetings and the same topics were arising time after time with no-one being charged to act nor were some Ward Councillors attending. If there was a wish for these meetings to be effective and for the public to participate would the Leader show some leadership and make them effective or scrap them.

The Leader confirmed there was to be a review of Area Assemblies as part of the Governance Review Group as to how engagement through communities could be improved.

(16) Councillor Cowles explained the Leader had agreed with him previously that politicians needed to learn from the experience of others. What, if anything, had he learnt from the experiences of Cardigan in West Wales (parking), and Kettering in Northamptonshire (Town Centre), as reported over the summer.

The Leader asked Councillor Cowles to elaborate on what he thought he should have learnt from them.

Councillor Cowles in a supplementary question confirmed that the removal of parking charges from Cardigan had had a tremendous benefit on footfall. Not only did local businesses benefit, but also the local supply chain with buying local.

In Kettering they opened their shopping developments in the centre of town rather than out of town. Local people commented on the improvements in the town centre as being beyond recognition.

Rotherham town centre had had everything destroyed. Questions had been asked about Main Street and Corporation Street. When would the Leader show some leadership and vision. He had the opportunity to put a mark on this town and it was about time we saw some come through rather than see inactivity.

The Leader responded by confirming information already shared by the Advisory Cabinet Member in the masterplan exercise looking at the town centre and the bringing in of experts. Parking was an area that had been raised previously, but there was a potential loss of £1 million revenue from car parks. If the Opposition could find this money in their budget the Leader was happy to consider this. Of note though was the action taken in Aberystwyth where the removal of parking charges had resulted in chaos and a campaign amongst shop keepers for this to be restored. There was a need to proceed with caution.

(17) Councillor Cowles to the Leader referred to the recent press learning of further job losses at Tata Steel. If Rotherham were to lose Tata completely as an employer, what would be the effect on the town and what would be the loss of revenue to the Council.

The Leader confirmed this was a difficult subject and the Council should send thoughts and solidarity to those losing their jobs.

On hearing the recent job losses announcements, the Council had been working very closely with representatives from Tata Steel and the Department of Works and Pensions to support workers who were to be made redundant. Clearly the first impact would be on those employees who lost their jobs to whom we offered our heartfelt sympathy. We would be doing everything we could as a Council to support them in getting back into work by offering assistance in a number of different ways.

If Tata Steel were to relocate away from Rotherham, the Council would stand to lose its 49% share of the business rates collected on works and premises currently occupied by Tata Steel within the Borough. This equated to a loss of revenue to the Council of c. £1.5m p.a. in 2015/16 terms. It was difficult to quantify what the other economic and social implications on the town might be, but the loss of well-paid skilled jobs within the Borough would undoubtedly reduce the spending power of such employees and would place increased demands on Council and other public sector services.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles asked the Leader if he was aware of what had happened at Tata, how many people would still be employed if the 700 jobs were taken out, what the losses were and whether he was thinking about mitigation matters or sitting back and waiting until the inevitable happened.

Since the news had been announced Councillor Cowles had been and visited the plant and spoken about Tata's plan. It was time the Leader started to look at these matters and taken mitigation before action was taken and asked the Leader if he agreed.

COUNCIL MEETING - 16/09/15

The Leader explained he had taken action, had spoken to colleagues in RIDO, was supporting multi-agency efforts, had had conversations with colleagues in the City Region in how best to help keep people in work should the worse possible things happen. Discussions were also taking place with trades unions representatives at the plant.

(18) Councillor Cowles referred to the operation of the crematorium which had been sold off to a company called Dignity. Successfully from their standpoint, but at some cost to residents who were now finding funeral costs increasingly expensive and asked have other Rotherham assets been sold to this company.

Councillor Sims, Advisory Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Enforcement, replied no. No other services have been sold to this company.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles asked the Advisory Cabinet Member if she had heard of any crematorium going bust as he had not. He described the company's simple operation with no transport costs and how ideal a business model this was. Dignity paid the Council a fixed sum each year, which was around £500,000 and the company was making a considerable sum of money. It paid dividends twice a year of 7.5%, a few Directors had pocketed £1 million each, and the share price had doubled £13.00 to £26.00 a share. Next time would the Council not consider selling things off, take some equity instead and ask people who knew about these things rather than taking a decision. This was a disaster the same as the Digital Region and the Council was urged to look to making some money for this town instead of other people taking all the profits.

Councillor Sims, Advisory Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Enforcement, confirmed the contract between the Council and Dignity Funeral Services Ltd. required Dignity to deliver all bereavement services that were previously provided by the Council. The Council had, however, retained ownership of all assets that were now maintained and managed by Dignity. In addition to the providing services on behalf of the Council, the contract had also seen Dignity invest over £3 million in bereavement services in Rotherham. The service and facilities available to Rotherham residents were far better than they have been at any point in the past. It was extremely unlikely that these improvements would have been made without the investment by Dignity.

(19) Councillor Cowles was sure the Leader agreed that he should be a guardian of the public purse and control expenditure wherever possible. That being the case just how many additional people did he think he needed and was acceptable to accompany him to the same public meeting.

The Leader gave his many thanks to Councillor Cowles for his question and confirmed he did of, course, attend many meetings all on his own.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles referred to the Leader's attendance at the Sheffield City Region meetings where he had a seat on the Board. Often he was accompanied by Commissioners Kenny and Manzie and Karl Battersby. Why did they all need to attend when Commissioner Kenny met once a week with Karl Battersby.

The Leader explained he was the Council's representative on the Combined Authority and where the Commissioners felt it necessary to accompany him to meetings they did so, much like other advisers which was quite common.

(20) Councillor Cowles reported that in both a recent article and in a conversation with a Commissioner it was stated that the role of Commissioner Kenny was still not fully defined. If this was the case, why were we paying £700 per day for the pleasure and did the Leader think this situation was acceptable.

The Leader confirmed that Commissioner Kenny was doing a good job and working towards getting the Council back on the right track.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles confirmed he had no issue with Commissioner Kenny, but queried what role she had within the Authority. With the valuable business experience she had Councillor Cowles thought her role would be obvious. Did the Leader agree that if there was no role it was an expensive £22,000 and in the interests of the taxpayer he should do something about it.

The Leader was sure Commissioner Kenny was doing a great job and it was the role of the Secretary of State to determine when the Commissioners would be removed from Rotherham and we needed to move forward and work together.

(21) Councillor Reeder stated that in recent years considerable sums of money have been spent in Eastwood, to little effect. The bulk of the money being spent on the physical environment. How much had been spent and, how long does the Leader need before he recognised this is the wrong approach.

Councillor Sims, Advisory Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Enforcement, replied that she could not give Councillor Reeder a precise figure, as spend was not recorded on an area basis. However, based on the amount of time operatives were working in the area, and the number of reports from the public about the area, we were able to estimate that the Council spends around £450 per week in the Eastwood Village area on Street cleansing. This gives an annual spend of approximately £23,400.

Councillor Sims agreed that additional resources on street cleansing in Eastwood was not the whole answer and this was why the Council, at the request of the Leader, had set up a multi-agency meeting for the central area dedicated to dealing with the challenges.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reeder referred to the amount of money spent on cohesion and the audit trail that must exist and asked if she could see what had been spent and on what.

Councillor Sims, Advisory Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Enforcement, would ensure a response would be provided in writing.

(22) Councillor Reeder stated that at recent road shows the public have demanded change. They have requested openness, transparency and inclusion in major decisions affecting the town. At the last meeting, quite out of the blue came the Pithouse West announcement. When would the Party opposite get the public message.

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet, Housing and the Local Economy, confirmed that in Spring 2015 the site was marketed, with the intention to secure a leisure scheme on the site. In May, 2015 Gulliver's made an offer for the site, but since this time, Officers have been in complex negotiations with the Coal Authority relating to claw back provisions which were imposed when the site was restored many years ago. These negotiations were finally concluded on 28th August, 2015. Whilst every effort was made to be as open as possible, until agreement with the Coal Authority was reached, the deal could have collapsed. The detail of those negotiations was commercially confidential.

In a supplementary comment Councillor Reeder confirmed she had no objections to the Gulliver's proposal, but pointed out she knew nothing about it when approached by the public.

64. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

65. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no confidential matters for consideration.