

**COUNCIL MEETING
21st October, 2015**

Present:- The Mayor (Councillor Maggi Clark) (in the Chair); Councillors Ahmed, Alam, Ali, Astbury, Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Buckley, Burton, Cowles, Currie, Cutts, Elliot, Ellis, Evans, Finnie, Fleming, Godfrey, Hague, Hamilton, Hoddinott, Hughes, Jepson, Jones, Khan, Lelliott, Mallinder, McNeely, Middleton, Parker, Pickering, Price, Read, Reeder, Reynolds, Roche, Roddison, Rose, Rushforth, Russell, Sansome, Steele, Taylor, Julie Turner, Tweed, C. Vines, M. Vines, Wallis, Watson, Whelbourn, Whysall and Wyatt.

66. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported on various events where she had represented the Council since the last meeting.

Church services included Maltby Civic Service, where a group of young people called the Environmentalists who were junior litter pickers and kept their area litter free, received the Maltby Town Council award for Young Person of the Year.

There was also the Rotherham Parade and Service celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. This was an extremely moving and thoughtful service along with the National Union of Mineworkers Memorial Day Service where Sheffield Cathedral presented a fantastic backdrop for the display of the banners from many Yorkshire pits with those from Kiveton Park, Treeton, and Dinnington Collieries among the banners from around Yorkshire. Most prominent was the banner for Kenningly Colliery. Kenningly Colliery would close on 18th December, 2015 bringing to an end the deep mine coal industry not only in Yorkshire, but in the UK as a whole.

It was an honour for the Mayor to represent Rotherham at the Inauguration of the new Master Cutler, Craig McKay, who announced that one of his two charities for the year would be Rotherham's own Hospice.

The Mayor was also privileged to host the presentation by the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire of the British Empire Medal to one of Rotherham's citizens, Mrs Janet Swift. An amazing woman and one of Rotherham's unsung heroes.

The Aagrah Business Group last week chose to stage their prestigious Annual Business Awards at Magna with about 1,000 people attending. Their Managing Director, Mohammed Aslam MBE, informed the Mayor that his decision to move from Leeds to Rotherham was evidence of a mark of confidence in Rotherham.

The Mayor also unveiled the Civic Society's blue plaque on the Three Cranes Building on High Street dedicated to former Member of Parliament, Stan Crowther.

As well as attending the proposed Anne Frank +You Exhibition and learning of the work that the Anne Frank Trust had done with schools in understanding the consequences of unchecked prejudice and discrimination whilst at the same time exploring, understanding, respecting and celebrating cultural diversity, every effort must be made for this to happen in Rotherham.

The Mayor also attended the opening of Baby Blossom Boutique pop up shop in the Imperial Buildings. The owner, Katie, was a credit to the town, a young woman working hard to turn her dreams into reality and assisted by the Prince's Trust.

But sadly not all was good news. Once again there had been a pointless attack on one of Rotherham's senior citizens. The Mayor asked the Council to join her in sending best wishes for a speedy recovery to Mr. Tommy Ward of Maltby who was badly beaten in an attack at his home.

But to end on a cheery note this month saw the Chuckle Brothers light up of the Heart of Steel. This was a great evening with a good turn out and excellent entertainment from the Schools Brass Band. This saw people coming together to celebrate something positive which symbolised the real spirit of the town.

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Managing Director submitted apologies for absence from Councillors Hunter, Pitchley, Robinson, Rosling, Sims, Smith, John Turner and Yasseen.

68. PETITIONS

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

- Containing 274 electronic and 490 paper signatures asking the Council to stop the sale of green space land at Catcliffe.

69. COMMUNICATIONS

No communications had been received.

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Currie, Rose, Sansome and Whelbourn declared disclosable pecuniary interests in the Notice of Motion for the Charter for Sustainable British Steel on the grounds of being employed, formerly employed or had family connections to the British Steel industry.

Councillor Jepson declared a personal interest in the minutes of the Standard Committee on the grounds of being Chair of Anston Parish Council and left the room whilst that item was discussed.

71. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 16th September, 2015, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Having been absent at the last Council meeting and being unable to ask a supplementary question, Councillor Currie exercised his right and referred to his previous question about taxi licensing and asked about the possibility of sub-contracting work out across the Local Authority on a yearly, three yearly or five yearly basis, how the risk would be managed and the potential for loss of revenue to the Council.

Councillor Ellis, Chairman of the Advisory Licensing Board, advised the detail around the De-Regulation Act was still being considered, with no precedence or case law.

Councillor Cowles raised a Point of Personal Explanation regarding a comment he had made at the last Council Meeting, to which he offered an apology to any resident in Rotherham he had offended. In doing so he suggested that any other persons guilty of any political wrong doing should also do the same.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

72. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(1) Mr. R. Bartle asked was the Leader aware that Whiston Brook, which had been a brook for hundreds of years, had been reclassified as a river and had had its name changed to Whiston Brook River. Why were the people of Whiston not asked if they wished this reclassification and name change to take place?

Councillor Roche, Advisory Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, replied that Whiston Brook was designated as a 'Main River' by the Environment Agency in 1999. However, this did not involve a name change, it was still called Whiston Brook.

In 1996 the Environment Agency informed the Council that a review was being undertaken by the Agency for the reclassification of Whiston Brook.

In January, 1999 the Council received a Notice under Section 194(5) of the Water Resources Act, 1991 that the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and Food was in the process of reclassifying Whiston Brook as a main river.

In a supplementary question Mr. Bartle referred to the changes and the powers that had transferred to the Environment Agency allowing Yorkshire Water access under certain conditions. This had led to frequently finding raw sewage being released into the Brook, floating debris and due to flooding some pollution to residents' gardens. He found this unacceptable and asked what the Council proposed to do about this.

Councillor Roche, Advisory Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, expressed his concern about any form of pollution and asked that details be forwarded on and he would endeavour to follow this up with the Environment Agency.

(2) Mr. M. Eyre stated he was glad to see that all parties agreed that protests by pressure groups should be regulated with an aim to prevention. However, he asked what restrictions would the Council like to see?

The Leader thanked Mr. Eyre for his question.

The Council and the Police recognised that people had a right to legitimate peaceful protests and free speech, but the best case scenario for restrictions would be for the Home Office to allow more powers for legal matters to be taken into account when the right to protest was being used repeatedly to the detriment of the local community.

In a supplementary question Mr. Eyre expressed his sorrow at the extreme right groups coming into the town causing disruption to local businesses and asked whether the restrictions would apply to ad hoc protests as well as the repeated protests as Rotherham businesses had had enough and need to be able to move forward.

The Leader pointed out that the restrictions should only apply to repeated protests as any group was entitled to come and protest as a one off event.

(3) Mr. B. Cutts referred to the corridor from the Mushroom Garage to Canklow and asked how many registered Mosques (Religious Community Discounts) there were and in the remainder of the Borough?

The Leader reported there were eleven mosques or educational religious establishments in the borough, nine of which were mosques located in Holmes, Moorgate, Eastwood, Masbrough and Wellgate respectively.

73. REVISED MEMBERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS 2015/16

Consideration was given to the revised membership arrangements for the current municipal year to include:-

- Councillor Elliot to become a member of the Improving Lives Select Commission to replace Councillor Currie.
- Councillor Whelbourn to replace Councillor Rosling as Vice-Chairman of the Wentworth South Area Assembly.

Resolved:- That the revisions to the membership arrangements be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

74. ROTHERHAM ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN

Consideration was given to the report which provided the Council with the latest version of the Rotherham Economic Growth Plan and sought agreement for it to be adopted; becoming a live document and commencing implementation of its actions and priorities.

The Plan was built on a robust evidence base, clear strategy and challenging economic outcomes and mapped out the priorities, objectives and outcomes for the Borough, underpinned by a programme of investment in economic infrastructure and activities over the short, medium and long term. The Plan was a result of partnership working between the public, voluntary and private sectors.

The Plan covered a ten year timeframe (2105-25) and was broken down into a number of themes, matching closely with the Sheffield City Region's (SCR) priorities to ensure close links between the Economic Growth Plan and the City Region's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). These themes were:-

- Grow existing and develop new businesses;
- Skills for employment and progression;
- Inclusion, well-being and employment;
- Employment land and business premises;
- Housing;
- Town centre; and
- Transport.

The Plan set out the challenges and ambitions for each theme, along with high level interventions and targets/impacts/outcomes.

Councillors Jepson and C. Vines agreed with elements of the Plan, but were unable to offer to their support due to the absence of any contingency plans for at risk high profile local businesses and the loss of green belt land.

Councillor Hoddinott believed the Plan was timely, having listened to the recent Radio 4 Programme on Rotherham, as it was about how Rotherham could recover and was aspirational for the creation of employment. There was a continuing trend away from traditional manufacturing to high-tech industries and a service based economy required a well-educated local workforce.

Local residents had contacted Councillor Fleming to express their concern about increased traffic congestion in the local area so he too was unable to offer his support to the Plan.

Councillor Currie expressed his fear for small businesses; especially local taxi firms if the plans by Uber to take over a number of regions went ahead. The Plan was aspirational with creation of 750 additional jobs and homes, but this must still be supported from a Rotherham context whilst keeping an eye on the work of the Sheffield City Region.

Councillor Parker too believed the Plan to be aspirational, but also out of date given the recent events involving the sale of the Pithouse West Site. He suggested there be better liaison with Robin Hood Airport to reduce the limitations on tour operators and for this to be expanded, but also expressed his concern about the possible loss of green belt land and for this reason could not offer his support to the Plan.

The Leader referred to the sad decline in the steel industry and the concerns around Tata Steel, which were beyond the control of the Council. This Plan should bring other private sector jobs into Rotherham into buildings at the Advanced Manufacturing Park, which were state of the art. The Plan was aspirational for the future of Rotherham, but this was owed to the people whom Councillors represented. He responded to Councillor Parker's comments about the sale of Pithouse West and suggested he also talk to Councillor Hoddinott, who was this Council's representative on the Robin Hood Consultative Committee.

In response to the comments Councillor Lelliott urged Elected Members to support the Plan, which was affordable yet aspirational and achievable.

Resolved:- (1) That the final version of the Economic Growth Plan be approved.

(2) That the Plan be monitored by the Business Growth Board (BGB) of the Local Strategic Partnership on a two-monthly basis, with an annual report on performance taken through both Partnership and RMBC structures.

(3) That a major review of the Plan be undertaken during the 2016/17 financial year, to take on board the vision and priorities coming out of Rotherham's new Community Strategy.

Mover:- Councillor Lelliott

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

75. HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY, STRATEGY AND PLAN 2015-2021

Consideration was given to the report which sought adoption of the Council's Highways Asset Management Policy, Strategy and revised Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) which covered the period 2015 – 2021.

The Asset Management Policy and Strategy set out the objectives that the Council aspired to achieve from the management of its assets. It linked into the corporate vision and demonstrated how the maintenance of the highway assets would support that vision over the medium to long term.

The HAMP was a technical document which set out the principles that would help shape and determine the future methods of managing the Council's highway assets. The HAMP set out the principles on which available funding from the DfT and decisions could be made for highway maintenance.

Councillor Beck, Chairman of the Improving Places Select Commission, confirmed the Policy, Strategy and Plan had been considered by Scrutiny and outlined how over 54 schemes would be delivered this year which had been suggested by Members and the understanding of the processes. This document would take on a life of its own and it was suggested that the performance be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Councillor Wyatt pointed out that there should be some acknowledgement of the additional investment on the primary roads in local areas, with more being put forward and being taken forward by the HAMP.

Resolved:- That the Highways Management Policy statement, Strategy and the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) covering the period 2015-2021 be approved and adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

76. NOTICE OF MOTION - CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE BRITISH STEEL

Moved by Councillor Ellis and seconded by Councillor Sansome

This Council:-

Notes with deep concern the recent announcements across the UK steel industry.

The Council urges the company to work with the trade unions to help build a sustainable future for steel in the UK. The Council recognises that the cost of energy and European rules on carbon emissions makes the UK a challenging climate in which to produce steel.

The Council believes that all levels of Government should support the UK steel industry, not only as a source of tens of thousands of jobs, but also given its role as a foundation industry of key strategic importance to the wider economy.

The Council, therefore, resolves to support the 'Charter for Sustainable British Steel' as promoted by the 'UK Steel' organisation. The Council also supports the proposals of UK Steel and Community regarding the EU Emissions Trading System, proposals which call for the steel sector to be helped to decarbonise in a way that ensures its future and the many thousands of valuable jobs it provides, rather than being pushed overseas.

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

(Councillors Currie, Rose, Sansome and Whelbourn declared disclosable pecuniary interests in the Notice of Motion for the Charter for Sustainable British Steel on the grounds of being employed, formerly employed or had family connections to the British Steel industry)

77. SCRUTINY UPDATE

Councillor Steele provided an update on activity and how the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board was focusing on the budget setting process for 2016/17 with initial budget savings proposals being referred on for consideration.

Some proposals had been referred back to the Commissioners seeking further information.

Councillor Beck was invited to share information on activity from the Improving Places Select Commission and he confirmed that updates had been provided following reviews on the Homelessness Strategy and Supporting the Local Economy.

Consideration had also been given to the Rotherham Growth Plan and the progress of each of the Task and Finish Groups which had been established to consider the detail of the Council's 'Cleaner – Greener' agenda. These related to waste management, grounds maintenance and town centre issues.

Resolved:- That the Scrutiny update noted.

78. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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

Councillor Currie referred to Minute No. 19 (Update on the Handling of Complaints) and the descriptions of “rough and tumble” in politics and stressed the importance of being respectful to others.

He also referred to Minute No. 21 (Whistleblowing Allegations Received) and the award received by Jayne Senior for highlighting issues relating to child sexual exploitation and believed the Council should be offering support and congratulations.

Mover:- Councillor Beck

Second:- Councillor Hughes

(Councillor Jepson declared a personal interest in this item on the grounds of being Chair of Anston Parish Council and left the room whilst this item was discussed)

79. AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Second:- Councillor Hughes

80. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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

Councillor Roche responded to Councillor Reynolds' comment about lobbying Government to provide additional funding relating to child sexual exploitation and confirmed that a meeting looking specifically at Adult Social Care was to take place shortly involving the Leader, Deputy Leader, Members of Parliament and himself with the Interim Strategic Director.

Mover:- Councillor Roche

Second:- Councillor Watson

81. PLANNING BOARD

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

Councillor Jepson referred to Minute No. 39 and the planning application which his Ward colleagues had supported which was development in the Green Belt, but according to the Council's Local Plan it was to remain in Green Belt. He expressed his concern when there appeared to be two opposing views.

Mover:- Councillor Atkin

Seconder:- Councillor Tweed

82. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

No questions had been received.

83. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO ADVISORY CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN

(1) Councillor Julie Turner asked could an explanation be given on the Rotherham Town Centre First Policy. This has never been explained and frankly it was difficult to see how this was being pursued.

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, explained that the Town Centre First was a national planning policy initiative that was reflected in the adopted Core Strategy.

In simple terms the Policy required that any proposals for development of uses such as new shops or offices, or leisure and entertainment facilities (things you would expect to see in a town centre) would only be granted planning permission outside of the town centre if it could be shown that there was no appropriate, available and suitable site in a town centre to accommodate the development.

The Council had produced a good practice guide to assist developers which explained the policy and its application in more detail. It was available on the Council's planning consultation website or by calling the planning service.

In a supplementary question Councillor Julie Turner referred to the Meadowhall development, which almost closed Sheffield and Rotherham town centres. Then came Parkgate with work continuing to develop this area moving the town centre focus to this area. At a recent meeting consideration was given to rent increases to town centre business and asked why local business were not contacted when it was difficult to trade and keep going. On a recent shopping trip the town centre was also found to be extremely quiet.

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, was unable to pass comment on Meadowhall as this was in Sheffield, but confirmed discussions were taking place with local businesses and a meeting was held two weeks ago with the business community asking their views on how best to work together and deliver and development schemes. There have been occasions when the town

centre was quiet, but every effort was being made to improve the situation.

(2) Councillor Julie Turner stated at the last Rotherham South Area Assembly meeting there was reference to the 'Rotherham Master Plan', and asked could it be explained what this plan was and why, in this supposed new age of openness and transparency, had she not been informed about such a plan?

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, confirmed the Rotherham Master Plan was a refresh of the Town Centre Renaissance Plan. The work had been awarded to Arup and officers were working on a list of the stakeholders for ARUP to speak to as part of the consultation process and invited Councillor Turner to be added to that list, should she want to be involved.

In a supplementary question Councillor Julie Turner referred to a couple of proposals being shared at the same Area Assembly meeting of potential developments of Forge Island. One involved retail development in this area and she asked who would buy retail space in this part of town. At the same meeting she was advised that Councillors were unable to ask questions. On looking this up in the Constitution she was unable to find where this was allowed and asked if an apology would be issued making it clear that Elected Members that wanted to ask questions could ask questions.

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, was unable to pass comment as she was not at that Area Assembly. However, with regards to Forge Island no development plans had as yet been put forward, which was why the Master Plan was under refresh. All key sites in the town centre would be considered on how best they could be developed.

Councillor McNeely, on a Point of Personal Explanation, confirmed, as Chair of the Rotherham South Area Assembly, that any Councillors who attended Area Assembly meetings were asked not to ask questions of the officers as they could ask them in another place. Area Assembly meetings were for members of the public and they should be allowed to speak rather than other Councillors taking up the time with their questions.

Councillor C. Vines, on a Point of Order, explained Elected Members were community leaders and, therefore, represented the community who were not always present or in a position to speak.

(3) Councillor Fleming asked how much debt does Rotherham Borough Council have and what does it cost annually to service that debt?

The Leader explained, that under strict Government rules the Council's debt could only be used on capital spend for the purchase of assets, land and buildings and not for the provision of services. At the moment the Council's current debt stood at £477.7m. Half of this debt was owed against the Housing Revenue Account and about £200m was as a result of the Decent Homes Programme. The remaining £200m approximately was historical debt. The annual servicing costs had been reduced from around £20m in 2010/11 to its current figure of £14.8m.

The Section 151 Officer was also tasked with making sure the debts were affordable and sustainable.

In a supplementary question Councillor Fleming asked if the capital amount was being paid off from that debt and how many years would it take to pay this off.

The Leader explained the minimum payment was being made against the cost of the interest. There was no fixed date for paying this back. The Council's debt, depending on which it was, would roll forward at different times. A decision would be made should a capital receipt be received to offset any debt. Should a briefing with the Section 151 Officer be required for further information, the Leader was more than happy to arrange this.

(4) Councillor C. Vines asked could he have a full explanation as at the last Council meeting on the 16th September the Leader stated that the bid put forward by Sheffield City Region to the Government did not include an Elected Mayor, but two weeks later it was announced that the deal did include a Mayoral Model.

The Leader confirmed the Council entered the negotiations not wanting an Elected Mayor and this remained the position. The Government came back fairly quickly ranking the bid as one of the best in the country and fast tracked this in order to move this forward. The negotiations for the quicker deal included a Mayor in exchange for the possibility of significant investment in the city region (£30m over thirty years) plus devolved powers.

The agreement in principle had been shared with Members subject to the spending commitments in the Autumn statement. This would also then be subject to approval by each of the Local Authorities making up the Combined Authority early in the new year and decisions made on whether the devolution deal with an Elected Mayor was acceptable.

In a supplementary question Councillor C. Vines referred to the BBC Sunday Politics Show on the 18th October, 2015, where the fiasco over the Elected Mayor for the region, for the bribe of £30m investment, meant a dictatorship rather than a democracy. He said that Angela Smith MP had indicated, what was already known, that a deal was confirmed which contradicted everything being suggested by the Council's Labour Leader in that an Elected Mayor and the £30m investment was just a proposal.

He said that this indicated that local Labour Leaders were holding their electorate in utter contempt.

In response the Leader said he was unable to comment on the Sunday Politics Show as he did not see the interview. He reiterated that there was an agreement to take forward on the basis of a number of proposals for Members' consideration as to their suitability and valid principles. The Leader's view was that the proposals pulled power and money down to the city region level. The Government, therefore, required that there was a directly Elected Mayor responsible for the decisions. Also in taking forward these discussions consideration would be given as to what powers the directly Elected Mayor had.

The Leader reconfirmed that the proposals were not "done deals", but simply the starting point for firm discussions with the Government about taking forward a devolution deal for South Yorkshire.

(5) Councillor Beck asked did the Leader agree with him that the proposed Gulliver's Theme Park development on the Pithouse West Site was a tremendous coup for Rotherham and would contribute significantly to the Growth Plan jobs target.

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, fully agreed with Councillor Beck that the Gulliver's theme park was fantastic news for the local economy, and a major contributor to the Growth Plan jobs target of 10,000 new jobs over the next 10 years.

More than 250 full time equivalent jobs would be created in the first phases, rising to 400 jobs including seasonal positions, when the whole development was complete and fully operational.

In a supplementary question Councillor Beck welcomed the plans coming to fruition on this site which was undergoing a comprehensive consultation process, which was well received by the public. However, he asked for assurances that the concerns about additional traffic, particularly through the Kiveton Park, area would be considered as part of the planning process.

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, confirmed that all matters would be considered as part of the planning process.

(6) Councillor Beck pointed out that following the Steel Summit held in Rotherham last week with the Secretary of State, it was more important than ever that support was given to the the steel industry locally, and crucially, the jobs that came with it. He asked for an outline of the support offered to Kiveton Park Steel who recently entered administration.

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, confirmed that on the 29th September, 2015 RiDO contacted the Administrators after the announcement that the company had gone into administration to offer the free redundancy support that Jobcentre Plus and National Careers Service could provide via Rapid Response, should they have to make any redundancies.

The Administrator had advised that all staff were still there and the company was still trading and fulfilling customer orders whilst actively looking for a buyer. The Administrator would advise if they have to make any redundancies and if this was the case, links were required to local recruitment agencies which RiDO could facilitate along with helping to organise a jobs fair on site.

Councillor Beck welcomed the support being offered and pointed out that Kiveton Park Steel were a long standing manufacturer of steel and every effort should be made to avoid redundancies.

Councillor Jepson was aware that people in his own Ward were employed by Kiveton Park Steel and asked that other Councillors be kept in the loop for information.

(7) Councillor Hoddinott stated that it had been a year since the Ofsted report into the Council's Children's Services and Local Safeguarding Children's Board and asked what progress had been made and specifically on the disappointing fact that only 41% of looked after children had had a dental check.

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, reported that throughout the last year the Council's Children's Services Directorate had been working to a robust and substantial improvement programme. Much progress had been made, although it was acknowledged there was much to do.

The CSE service had been remodelled and was now delivered through the Evolve team, the MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) which went live on 1st April, 2015 and had recently been Ofsted inspected. The work on CSE was praised considerably and permission was asked to use the working protocols for use with other local authorities. The progress in this area was remarkable.

The delivery of work was continuing to improve performance and quality across services. This was still work in progress and would not be solved in six months, but was part of a three year recovery plan. Further information was also to be provided on the steps being taken moving forward. Funding would also be required in order to make the changes and put things right.

Performance in relation to dental checks for Looked After Children exemplified the progress being made, which nationally had been reported through an older model. This model assumed checks were undertaken

every twelve months giving a figure of 42% when in fact they were undertaken every six months giving a more realistic figure of around 80%.

Through concerted joint working with health colleagues and commissioning framework there had been a significant shift in checks now being undertaken and as could be seen from the performance figures with over 95% of children in care now receiving the dental checks they needed with the aim of increasing this to 100%.

April, 2015	70.5%
May, 2015	64.7%
June, 2015	86.6%
July, 2015	94.1%
August, 2015	95.8%
September, 2015	95.2%

In a supplementary question Councillor Hoddinott welcomed the progress made and the aims to increase performance of dental checks up to 100% which was a measure of how looked after children were cared for and asked about the recent inspection of Children's Services and if the information could be shared with Elected Members to see the progress being made.

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, confirmed he was not yet in receipt of a written report, but once he had received a copy he would ensure Elected Members received a copy.

(8) Councillor Cowles alleged that when asked if Dignity managed other assets on behalf of the Council, Councillor Sims had given a brusque no, but this was not true. Dignity managed a number of cemeteries in the borough, Moorgate, Wath, Greasbrough, Maltby ... good market coverage, was Councillor Sims aware or did she mislead Members.

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, referred to the previously asked question and reported that as stated in the response to Councillor Cowles there had been no attempt to mislead and that the Council's Bereavement Service was now delivered through Dignity Funerals Ltd.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles referred to the share price of Dignity which had doubled and bonuses had been paid out. He had also looked at why the company were doing so well and when comparing simple funeral costs Sheffield was 27% cheaper, Barnsley was 19% cheaper and 16% cheaper in Rotherham if Dignity was not used. If other services were added on the gap increased significantly. Some of the other processes employed were not particularly as comforting as one might have wished and asked was the Advisory Cabinet Member aware of their other business practises being used.

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, was not fully aware of the pricing structure, but believed this would vary according to the services offered. He confirmed a response to this would be provided in writing.

(9) Councillor Cowles stated that in the article in the Advertiser concerning the Crematorium and Dignity, Councillor Sims suggested the people of Rotherham got a far better service than they otherwise would. If the private sector did it better should we outsource much more, if not why not?

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, stated that the decision to outsource any element of a Council service to an external organisation was something that should be considered on a case by case basis. The Council was committed to securing the best services it could at the lowest cost and in some cases that would mean that others provide the service on our behalf. The Council was open to all types of service delivery, recognising that one size did not fit all.

He identified that in 2004 the Council had undertaken a significant review of its Bereavement Service. This review identified the need for significant investment in the service and a number of options were considered. The decision was made that the most appropriate option was that of a public/private partnership between the Council and Dignity Funeral Services Ltd. who had invested £3m into this service through capital expenditure. A significant element of this decision was the need for extensive investment in the service that the Council was unable to fund, even via prudential borrowing. This included the construction of a Bereavement Services administration centre, grounds maintenance depot, gardens of remembrance, car park for cemetery users and improvements to the crematorium (including bringing the cremators up to the required environmental standards).

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles pointed out that also in the Advertiser Councillor Sims that this profitable business needed investment of £3m. Dignity did not invest £3m in one go, but this investment was provided over time from profits of the business and £3m investment was only half of the investment into DRL. He would like to know more how decisions were made about what to invest in and what was outsourced as the track record was consistently bad.

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, confirmed that decisions were taken on a case by case basis and this decision taken in 2004 to move forward with the Dignity proposal.

(10) Councillor Reynolds asked was the report on Magna from PwC delivered yet and what were its conclusions?

The Leader confirmed the report had now been received earlier this month and its conclusions and findings were now being considered. A report would be brought forward for consideration by the Managing

Director Commissioner at one of her formal decision-making meetings and would then be shared with Members.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds asked if all Members could have sight of the report.

The Leader confirmed that would be made available in the next few weeks.

(11) Councillor Reynolds asked what was the cost of the one way system in Bramley and what were the benefits to the shops and residents?

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, confirmed the cost of the Bramley Traffic Management Scheme was approximately £533k.

The benefits for shops and residents were predominantly associated with easing congestion through the Village Centre. The scheme also eased congestion on the A631 for traffic turning right into Cross Street, which previously queued past the end of the right turn lane. The traffic scheme acknowledged the demand for on street parking and accommodated it where possible, with four parking spaces (including two disabled spaces) on Main Street and echelon parking provided on Cross Street.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds referred to a previous article in the Rotherham Advertiser about the Traffic Regulation Order being illegal and asked if this was going to be re-looked at as part of the decision making process.

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, was unable to comment on the legalities of the Traffic Regulation Order so confirmed a response to this would be provided in writing.

(12) Councillor Reynolds asked who paid for the Enough is Enough full page advertisement in the Rotherham Advertiser which appeared in the issue on 9th October, 2015?

The Leader confirmed the advertisement in the Rotherham Advertiser on 9th October, 2015 was paid for by the Council, acting in its community leadership role, on behalf of the individuals and organisations who signed up to the statement of solidarity published in the advertisement and was funded via the Corporate Communications and Marketing budget.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds pointed out that he had not been contacted about signing this petition until it appeared in the newspaper and queried whether this was political advertising.

The Leader confirmed this was not political advertising, but was for a good cause.

(13) Councillor Reynolds asked how long would the Willmott Dixon contract run for, who awarded it and who decided its duration?

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, reported that the Housing Repairs and Maintenance contract was awarded by Cabinet on the 21st July, 2010.

The contract was awarded to two companies, Morrisons (who were subsequently taken over by Mears), and the Willmott Dixon Partnership.

The contract period was for ten years subject to the achievement of stipulated performance targets. These targets have always been met and surpassed.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds asked why the contract had been awarded for a period of ten years, when contracts were normally awarded for three or even five years, and how this was considered cost effective.

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy, explained this contract was subject to the achievement of targets, which if not met, would result in the contract being revoked.

(14) Councillor Parker congratulated the Leader on the sentiments in the article in the Rotherham Advertiser about the waste of money that Rotherham was suffering due to the demonstrations, but could he please explain why Members of the Opposition were not asked to support this.

The Leader pointed out that on reflection he apologised for not being able to involve everyone, but the initiative was agreed at a small meeting of community leaders.

It was agreed that the most powerful way of expressing the views of most people in Rotherham was by a statement signed off by all the leaders of the key organisations in the Borough.

The purpose of the advert was to raise awareness and for people to express their frustration in a peaceful way and by standing in solidarity. As Leader of the Council and not Leader of the Labour Group he had also signed the petition and other Councillors were asked to consider signing also.

In a supplementary question Councillor Parker suggested the advertisement and petition had been put together in a rush and no real thought had been given to including Members of the Opposition. He suggested more needed to be done to work together rather than be unco-operative.

The Leader responded that he was more than happy to work together with other Members and had led this petition as Leader of the Council and in retrospect other people could have been asked to sign up to the petition. With hindsight this could have been done differently and he apologised for this.

84. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

85. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no confidential matters for consideration.