

**COUNCIL SEMINAR
2nd June, 2016**

Present:- Councillor (in the Chair); Councillors Albiston, Allcock, Andrews, Cusworth, Ellis, Jarvis, Lelliott, McNeely, Marles, Rushforth, Sansome, Taylor, Wyatt and Yasseen.

ROTHERHAM TOWN CENTRE - PROTEST MARCHES

Members received a briefing from the Director of Regeneration and Environment and also from representatives of the South Yorkshire Police about the forthcoming protest march which would be taking place within the Rotherham town centre on Saturday 4th June, 2016. The briefing and Members' subsequent discussion included the following salient issues:-

: the legislative powers within Sections 12, 13 and 14 of the Public Order Act 1986 relating to the control of protest marches (it was noted that whilst the Police would take action to prevent any public disorder arising from the march, there was no specific cause yet identified to prevent the march taking place on 4 June);

: the cost (public expenditure) incurred in managing and policing protest marches;

: the importance of the freedom of speech; as well as the prevention of any insulting, offensive and racist language and any criminal behaviour;

: discussions with the three local Members of Parliament and the representations being made to the Secretary of State for the Home Department (the Rt Hon Theresa May MP) about the possibility of changes in national legislation in order to prevent such protest marches taking place and placing tighter restrictions upon those marches which do take place;

: ensuring that any rival/opposing marches were not in conflict in the Rotherham town centre;

: the protection of vulnerable communities;

: minimising disruption to the usual activities (trading, shopping etc) within the Rotherham town centre; the intention to undertake a survey of shoppers and traders in order to obtain more detailed information about the impact of protest marches on the town centre;

: ensuring that the persons marching would stay within the defined area of the town centre to be used for the march;

REPORT FOR INFORMATION - 02/06/16

: the gathering of information and intelligence about the marches and the risk of public disorder, including the possible impact upon other localities within the Rotherham Borough area, far beyond the Rotherham town centre;

: statistical details of persons arrested and charged with public order offences and criminal activity resulting from their participation in protest marches;

: obtaining information from other cities and towns (nationwide) about the control of protest marches occurring elsewhere;

: the likelihood of other protest marches taking place within the Rotherham town centre in the future.

It was noted that the Borough Council and the South Yorkshire Police would continue to make representations to the Secretary of State for the Home Department in respect of possible amendments to current legislation. Members thanked the officials for this informative briefing.