

**COUNCIL MEETING
24th January, 2018**

Present:- The Mayor of Rotherham (Councillor Eve Rose Keenan) (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Albiston, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Bird, Buckley, Carter, Clark, Cooksey, Cowles, Cusworth, B. Cutts, Elliot, M. Elliott, R. Elliott, Ellis, Evans, Hague, Hoddinott, Ireland, Jarvis, Jepson, Jones, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Mallinder, Marles, Marriott, Napper, Pitchley, Price, Read, Reeder, Rushforth, Russell, Sansome, Senior, Sheppard, Short, Simpson, Steele, Julie Turner, Tweed, Vjestica, Walsh, Watson, Williams, Whysall, Wyatt and Yasseen.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

120. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor was honoured to present two awards, the first to Sarah Bellamy, who won the 'Youth Worker of the Year Award' at the 'Children and Young People Now' Awards in November.

The second to Ashlea Harvey, co-ordinator of the Young Inspectors, who received the Volunteering and Social Action Award in November.

The Mayor was pleased to share a written report on her activity since the last Council meeting, but wanted to highlight the honour of being asked to become Patron of Rotherham RISE and how she could promote and share information about this valuable service.

121. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allcock, Brookes, D. Cutts, Fenwick-Green, Taylor and John Turner.

122. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications received.

123. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 13th December 2017, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

124. PETITIONS

The Mayor reported that one petition had been submitted, but had not met the threshold for consideration by Council, and would be referred to the relevant directorate for a response to be prepared:-

- Containing 249 signatures requesting support to save the Dog Wardens Service.

125. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cusworth declared a personal interest in Agenda Items 12 and 15 on the grounds of close relatives being Council tenants and would not speak on the matter nor participate in the vote.

Councillor Senior declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 14 and would not speak on the matter nor participate in the vote.

Councillors Atkin, Keenan, Marles and Williams declared personal interests in Agenda Item 15 on the grounds of close relatives being Council tenants and would not speak on the matter nor participate in the vote.

Councillors Andrews, Lelliott, McNeely, Reeder and Wyatt declared disclosable interests in Agenda Item 15 on the grounds of either being housing or garage tenants and left the room whilst this item was discussed.

126. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(1) In asking his question Mr. L. Harron elaborated on the previous Council Meeting where the Leader had indicated he would reflect on the question detail asked at that point and would take a representation. Mr. Harron had emailed the Leader and was awaiting a response.

He went on to ask his question that on 16th December, 2014 he offered RMBC two days for three months to help improve communication about Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Ian Thomas said:- "There are thousands who want to help in a similar way."

He asked would the Leader ask Ian Thomas to give a written report about how he had used this help?

The Leader apologised for not replying to the email, but would endeavour to follow this up.

His concern would be around the Council's ability to communicate effectively around CSE and was sure Mr. Harron shared his concern. The Leader believed this had improved significantly. For example, secondary school age children, surveyed annually, were asked if they had been taught in school about safeguarding and child sexual exploitation. Over half in 2015 confirmed they had. This had improved further to 81.15%.

The highest percentage improvement had been with Year 10 pupils, which was now up to 90% in both 2016 and 2017.

On the basis of the information above the Leader did not feel it was a good use of the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services time to produce a report.

Mr. Harron believed the Leader missed the point as his question was not about any of the response, but about using people's voluntary time. Within six weeks of him arriving in Rotherham Ian Thomas claimed thousands of people wanting to help. The question was more around the Strategic Director of Children's Services integrity when he said he would do things and whether he actually followed them up.

Ian Thomas' Deputy was Jean Imray and she had sat in the Chamber on the 6th September, 2017 and presented a report and claimed that a "so called" independent expert gave her reasons for Rotherham returning 1400 copies of a publication which was discussed three years ago. In his supplementary question Mr. Harron asked would the Leader please provide all Councillors and himself with the name and position of the "so called" independent expert that gave these reasons to Ian Thomas.

The Leader was familiar with the circumstances described and was aware that Mr. Harron had pursued and attempted to obtain this information from the Council. The Council did not hold this information and, therefore, was unable to supply it to Mr. Harron.

(2) Mr. R. Beecher referred at the last Council meeting where Councillor Atkin stated the Fire Authority's budget had been reduced by almost 25% since austerity began in 2010. What he failed to state was how come in that same period the Authority had banked over £19m into its reserves. He asked why was that?

Councillor Atkin thanked Mr. Beecher for his question. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue had suffered severe cuts to its budget, having lost around £12.5 million in Government funding since 2010 – a 29% reduction. Throughout this period, the service had continually committed to providing the best service to local people within the resources available to it. Strong financial planning and the timely delivery of efficiency saving proposals have enabled the Fire Authority to build up healthy reserves of around £25 million.

The growth in reserves was mainly a consequence of the retirement rate of operational staff outpacing the rate at which funding had reduced and having no confidence to recruit new fire fighters (which were now a forty year commitment) due to uncertainty about the extent and duration of future cuts.

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A significant proportion of these reserves would now be spent over the next few years on necessary capital projects, including investments in equipment, vehicles and buildings for firefighters. This would leave a much smaller amount of other earmarked and general reserves (expected to be around £5 million) to provide for other initiatives and unexpected future costs, such as insurance and operational contingency.

In a supplementary question Mr. Beecher explained how in November, 2016 at a FBU Branch Meeting he had asked Councillors Atkin and Buckley how much they would save with the removal of the second appliance in Rotherham. Neither could answer yet they both voted for that cut. In the same meeting Councillors were asked how the Fire Authority could amass such vast reserves and they were quoted as saying "When organising our finances we always budget to make a profit". Mr. Beecher was sure the public of Rotherham would be delighted to hear this given their Council Tax increases.

He further quoted from the bulletin from the Chair of the Fire Authority "Whilst the primary function of the Fire Authority is to oversee and review the work of the service I want to make it clear that fellow members and I are extremely supportive of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue employees. As much as we are here to serve the public, we are also here to help you in the important work you do, to promote achievements and to ensure your wellbeing".

He asked the Fire Authority spokesperson that if this was the primary function then prove it and give back the fire engine so officers could protect the public of Rotherham and allow them to do the job they signed up for and loved.

Councillor Atkin confirmed both he and Councillor Buckley attended the meeting at the FBU request and he did say the Fire Authority had budgeted and made a surplus. Every year approximately twenty-five firefighters retired, which was the equivalent of £1 million savings on revenue and cuts were not so severe. This meant that over the last seven years the amount of spending out paced the cuts and had led to reserves. These reserves were now being used so that fire fighters had the best equipment to do their job.

(3) Mr. A. Reid indicated the Fire Authority IRMP stated that when you change a station onto the day staffing system then night time calls would be covered by a resilience appliance, so where was ours at Rotherham?

Councillor Atkin confirmed that during the night time period, Rotherham's situation was no different to fourteen other stations which also have a single fire engine available and relied upon supporting appliances from elsewhere. The second fire engine at Rotherham was intended to be 'resilience' retained, meaning it would only be mobilised where Rotherham and other stations became sequentially committed to an incident or incidents, which was infrequent.

The absence of such arrangements at Rotherham was currently covered by the facility to mobilise Birley Moor's retained fire engine into Rotherham should the need arise. Similar arrangements were already in place at Barnsley, with night time resilience arrangements expected to be in place at Rotherham by late February.

In a supplementary question Mr. Reid pointed out that Barnsley day stepping had been in for three years and after eleven months Rotherham still did not have night time resilience in place. He, therefore, asked Rotherham's representatives to lobby other Fire Authority Members and stand up for their constituents and give back their front line appliance.

Councillor Atkin explained night time resilience arrangements involved fire fighters from nearby on-call fire stations staffing the second fire engine, in the event that the first fire engine was committed to an incident and where operational circumstances allowed.

He reaffirmed the point about the second appliance being removed. This was not the case and it still remained in Rotherham.

(4) Mr. N. Fretwell referred to the 1st January this year the Fire Authority issued 'H' days to staff, this meant both Barnsley and Rotherham had just one pump on nights.

Both had serious house fires and unfortunately Barnsley's resulted in a fatality and he asked was Councillor Atkin aware of this?

Councillor Atkin confirmed the Fire Authority was made aware of all fatal incidents, including the sad news of the fatal incident in Barnsley. As with all fire stations in South Yorkshire and around the country, the service's response to 999 incidents continued to be supported by crews from other, nearby stations. In both incidents on 1st January, as was the case for other incidents the service attended, the immediate response provided by the fire engines at Rotherham and Barnsley fire stations was quickly supported by fire engines from other, nearby stations.

Barnsley and Rotherham have had one fire engine on duty at night since day crewing arrangements were introduced. 'H' days ensured the service was paying only double time to the numbers of firefighters that were required to be on duty on a bank holiday.

The best way of stopping deaths was to prevent fires from occurring in the first place. It was for this reason the Fire Authority was supporting the Fire Service's campaign to call on local authorities, health partners and third sector organisations to refer those who were most at risk of fire to it for support.

In a supplementary question Mr. Fretwell confirmed "H" days were given to staff on bank holidays to reduce the wages bill when the senior management team deemed too many staff were on duty. On this

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occasion staff were available to put both Barnsley and Rotherham's second appliance on the run yet for purely financial reasons they were not and the gamble resulted in a fatality. He asked how many more gambles were the Fire Authority prepared to take before the errors of the cuts were realised.

Councillor Atkin reiterated 'H' days were used on bank holidays where there were more firefighters on duty than required to staff fire engines. They were used to avoid paying double time to more people than was operationally necessary.

The change to the staffing of Barnsley's second fire engine happened in early 2016 and the change to the staffing of Rotherham's second fire engine happened in March, 2017

(5) Mr. M. Harrison was unable to attend today's meeting and permission was given for Mr. Beecher to ask his question on his behalf and he asked Councillor Read if he was fully aware of the effects the cuts at Rotherham Fire Station were having on fire cover levels provided at night time, to the constituents he served?

The Leader wished to send his best wishes to Mr. Harrison and his wife. He confirmed he was briefed regularly by the Fire Authority and he had recently met the Chief Fire Officer so he was informed of the developments in Rotherham. He extended his offer to meet with members of the FBU separately if it was required.

(6) Mr. C. Taylor explained how on 18th October, 2017 Councillor Denise Lelliott stated that Rotherham Council have a target of 14,000 new houses to be built across Rotherham of which 2% would be built on green belt land. He asked could she confirm that these figures were correct.

Councillor Lelliott explained the Council had a statutory duty to produce a Local Plan and the Council's housing target over the Local Plan period was 14,371 new homes. The sites to be allocated would take up 2% of land reallocated from Green Belt for development as a percentage of the total area of Green Belt land in the Borough.

Councillor Lelliott apologised if the information provided previously was not clear.

In a supplementary question Mr. Taylor asked was the 2% of the total Green Belt land or 2% of the Green Belt land allocation in the Local Plan.

Councillor Lelliott explained, to avoid further confusion, that it was 2% of Green Belt land, with a total of 98% of the allocated sites being on brownfield land.

(7) Mr. P. Thirlwall again referred to the Leader's previous comment in March, 2017 regarding a review of Standing Orders and in particular the fifty word limit for public questions.

He asked about the Special Responsibility Allowance of £8,617 paid to the Leader of UKIP which did not appear in the Constitution, the Constitution had not been amended in accordance with Clause 19 (3) and the Special Responsibility Allowance did not appear in the minutes of the AGM, therefore, asked was this payment ultra vires?

Mr. Thirlwall had provided this extract from the Constitution:-

Clause 19 Review and Revision of the Constitution.

(3) Changes to the Constitution.

The full Council will ONLY approve changes to the constitution after considering proposals from the Chief Executive, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance.

However the Director of Legal and Democratic Services may make clerical amendments to the Constitution to reflect any changes in legislation or changes in the title and responsibilities of council officers or bodies without reference to the Council.

The Leader understood Mr. Thirlwall had been in correspondence with the Monitoring Officer in relation to this issue. The payment of the Special Responsibility Allowance to the Leader of the main opposition group was not ultra vires and had been part of the Members' Allowance Scheme since the scheme was introduced. The Council amended the Constitution on the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel in July, 2015 and further amendments to all allowances were agreed in July, 2017. Whilst there was a clerical error in the report in July, 2017 the decision by Council still gave effect to the reduction in the special responsibility allowance of the Leader of the main opposition group because it applied it to all special responsibility allowances in the scheme.

A full response had been provided by the Monitoring Officer about the Constitution and the Leader was advised the Council had acted appropriately and the Constitution updated accordingly.

In a supplementary question Mr. Thirlwall disagreed with the Leader's response and believed the decision could not be made without coming back to full Council. At the last meeting the Leader said on advice from the Monitoring Officer that minor corrections could be made to the Constitution between Council meetings even though Mr. Thirlwall had demonstrated this could not be done without full Council approval. This had not been done and the Leader appeared to be sticking to a false statement.

Mr. Thirlwall, therefore, asked if the Leader agreed with him that a Special Responsibility Allowance of £8,617 over and above the basic council allowance should be paid to the Leader of the opposition party.

His description of the UKIP Party and ensuing comments were ruled out of order by the Mayor and the Leader passed no further comment.

127. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That under section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting should it be necessary on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs of Part 1 of schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

128. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader welcomed the opportunity to address the Council and drew attention to a couple of matters.

The first in relation to an update following the passing of a motion on the Fusion Bid, which was money being sought from Government as a partnership to support victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation through the Operation Stovewood trials. The Council was £6 million adrift of £8 million. Some progress had been made and some support was likely from the NHS and Ministry of Justice.

The Chief Executive, Police and Crime Commissioner and the Leader had met with the Home Office Minister, Victoria Atkins, last week for a constructive meeting organised by Sarah Champion M.P. who was thanked for her input.

129. MINUTES OF THE CABINET AND COMMISSIONERS' DECISION MAKING MEETING

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting held 11th December, 2017, be received.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

130. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - OCTOBER FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2017/18 AND UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2019/20

Further to Minute No. 84 of the meeting of the Cabinet and Commissioners held on 11th December, 2017 consideration was given to the report which detailed the October Financial Monitoring Report and Update of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2019/20. It

contained a recommendation to update the Council's Capital Programme to include the Superfast Broadband Project for South Yorkshire proposal for further extension of fibre broadband accessibility across South Yorkshire in order to make it available to as close to 100% coverage as technically possible.

Discussion ensued on the viability and reliability for 100% coverage and the cost to the Council if this could not be achieved, the impact and contribution to the budget pressures and how this could be mitigated.

The Leader advised many of the difficulties encountered had been with one particular company, but he was happy to discuss any aspect further with Members.

Resolved:- That the proposal to further extend Superfast Broadband across South Yorkshire be approved on a basis of being cost neutral to the Council and the Authority's share of the capital investment be added to the Capital Programme.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Alam

131. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Further to Minute No. 85 of the meeting of the Cabinet and Commissioners held on 11th December, 2017 consideration was given to the report which detailed the review of the Council Tax Support Scheme which contained recommendations for the Council to adopt the scheme.

In 2013 the Government abolished the national scheme and asked Local Authorities to create their own local Council Tax Support (CTS) Schemes with reduced funding. Local CTS Schemes have to be reviewed annually and this report set out recommendations following this year's review which was carried out within the context of the substantial financial challenges facing the Council.

Rotherham's scheme had remained unchanged since it was implemented, whereas many other Councils have already reviewed their schemes and provide support which was significantly less than was currently provided by Rotherham.

The proposals related only to support for working age claimants (the support provided to pensioner claimants remain unchanged at nationally determined levels).

The options which were selected included retaining the current scheme and a further seven change options which could be implemented individually or in combination. Any proposal to change the Council Tax Support Scheme required the Council to consult major preceptors (Fire and Rescue Authority and Police and Crime Commissioner) and also to

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undertake a public consultation exercise. Consultation had been held with the major preceptors and a public consultation was undertaken over the period 9th October, 2017 to 20th November, 2017.

A total of 401 responses were received and detailed analysis of the consultation, including its scope and the analysis of the responses received, was included within the report. These informed the final recommendations.

Legislation required that any changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme must be adopted by Full Council by 31st January, 2018 in order to come into effect for 2018/19.

Members noted that this report had been considered in detail by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board where there had been some disagreement with the chosen options as the most vulnerable claimants who were most reliant on the CTS may be impacted upon.

After careful consideration the majority of Members were supportive of the taper rate proposed to be introduced and the effect that this would have on the amount of Council Tax that claimants would be required to pay on a weekly or annual basis. It was considered that as the options delivering the largest savings - maximum support and band cap - were not being recommended for adoption and a taper of 30% would be necessary in order to deliver a significant saving.

Resolved:- That the following amendments to the current Council Tax Support Scheme be approved to take effect from 1st April 2018, within the revised scheme:-

- 100% support for qualifying care leavers.
- A standard £10.00 deduction for non-dependants in employment and a standard £5.00 deduction for non-dependants not in employment.
- The introduction of a taper rate of 30%.
- Discretion is introduced into the Council Tax Support Scheme to limit the number of assessments for claimants in receipt of Universal Credit where there are only small changes to Universal Credit entitlement.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Alam

132. **RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2018/19**

At its meeting on 15th January, 2018, the Cabinet considered a report in respect of the calculation of the proposed Council Tax Base for 2018/19 which sought approval by Council.

Resolved:- That the amount calculated by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council as its Council Tax Base and those of the Parish Councils shown at Appendix 1 for 2018/19 be a total of 69,240.35 Band D Equivalent Properties.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Second:- Councillor Watson

133. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - INCREASE IN COUNCIL TAX EMPTY PROPERTY PREMIUM

At its meeting on 15th January, 2018, the Cabinet considered a report in respect of the proposed increase in Council Tax Empty Property Premium.

From 2013/14 the Government introduced changes affecting the way that Council Tax was charged on certain types of empty property or second homes, by allowing Local Authorities increased discretion to set the level of charges locally.

One option available to Local Authorities was the introduction of a 50% Premium for long term empty properties which had been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a period of over two years. The principle of the introduction of the Premium was to incentivise owners to bring empty properties back into use.

The Council introduced the Council Tax Premium with effect from 1st April, 2013 with the 50% Premium being charged on the two year anniversary of a property becoming unoccupied and substantially unfurnished.

In the November 2017 Budget statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that authorities would be given the power to increase the Council Tax empty homes premium from the current level of 50% to 100% as further encouragement to owners to bring empty properties back into use.

No further detail has yet been released by the Government regarding the implementation timeline or any exceptions that may be introduced and the change would require legislation meaning the earliest implementation date cannot yet be confirmed.

Resolved:- That an increase in the Empty Property Premium from 50% to 100% from the 1st April, 2018 or any later date upon which the Autumn Budget 2017 provision to increase the Empty Homes Premium was implemented.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Second:- Councillor Read

134. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENTS & SERVICE CHARGES 2018/19

At its meeting on 15th January, 2018, the Cabinet considered a report which sought approval for the proposed values for the setting of the housing rents, non- dwelling rents and service charges for 2018/19.

In October 2017 the Government confirmed details of future social rent policy from 2020, after the four-year period of 1% rent decreases ended.

The announcement confirmed that for the five years from 2020/21, providers would be able to increase rents, up to a limit of Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) plus 1% each year.

This report also considered proposed increases to charges for garages, garage plot sites, cooking gas and communal facilities including laundry services where provided, maintaining District Heating charges for 2018/19 and summarised the draft HRA budget.

Resolved:- (1) That dwelling rents be reduced by 1% for 2018/19 in line with the requirements outlined in the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

(2) That there be a 3% increase to charges for garage rents, communal facilities, cooking gas and laundry facilities in 2018/19 in line with the increase in Consumer Price Index as at September 2017.

(3) That the unit charge per Kwh for District Heating Schemes remain at the same level as agreed by the Council in December 2017.

(4) That the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2018/19 be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Beck
Alam

Seconder:- Councillor

135. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19

At its meeting on 15th January, 2018, the Cabinet considered a report which detailed how the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) recorded all expenditure and income relating to the provision of council housing and related services, and the Council was required to produce a HRA Business Plan setting out its investment priorities over a 30 year period.

Following the introduction in 2012 of HRA self-financing, whereby the Council was awarded control over its HRA in return for taking on a proportion of national housing debt, Rotherham's HRA was in a strong position with a healthy level of reserves. However, a number of policies have been introduced by Central Government that resulted in a reduction to HRA resources.

Whilst significant savings were required to ensure the HRA Business Plan was balanced over the 30 year period the extent of these pressures had reduced somewhat following recent policy announcements; the most significant of which was the return of the previous rent formula from 2020-21 onwards i.e. CPI + 1% for five years. This policy change increased HRA balances by over £104m over the life of the plan.

This report provided a detailed technical overview of the current position and the reason for changes to the Plan and was to be considered alongside proposed 2018-19 rents, service charges and budgets.

Resolved:- (1) That the proposed 2018-19 Base Case for the HRA Business Plan and investment in services detailed within be approved.

(2) That the plan be reviewed annually to provide an updated financial position as new government regulations come into force.

Mover:- Councillor Beck
Watson

Seconder:- Councillor

136. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY UPDATE

Councillor Steele, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, was pleased to introduce the Overview and Scrutiny Update, which covered the last two months of work.

Particular reference was made to the Emergency Planning Review which led to training for all members and recommendations for the Major Incident Plan.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had also looked at the review of the Council Tax Support Scheme and the effect this would have on Universal Credit.

In addition, consideration had been given to the Asset Management arrangements, the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Budget and the use of consultants and agency staff.

The Improving Places Selection Commission had also focused on the Time for Action Enforcement Policy, the work with Doncaster on the Town Centre and the Waste Options Appraisal looking particularly at hard to reach groups.

The Health Select Commission had considered adolescent mental health and the associated pathways and the refresh of the Health and Wellbeing Integrated Strategy.

The Improving Lives Select Commission had been monitoring progress on the Council's function regarding CSE support and the Domestic Abuse Policy.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the update noted.

Mover:- Councillor Steele

Seconder:- Councillor Cowles

137. NOTICE OF MOTION - REINSTATEMENT OF THE SECOND PUMP AT ROTHERHAM FIRE STATION

Proposed by Councillor R. Elliott and seconded by Councillor Short:-

In order to provide the residents of Rotherham with a safe level of fire cover, fire fighters and equipment, overnight and, reduce the level of risk to fire fighters attending a fire related incident, this Council supports the need to re-instate the second pump together with the required number of fire fighters on the night shift at the fire station in Eastwood.

Councillor Read proposed and Councillor Watson seconded the following amendment for the motion to now read:-

This Council notes:-

1. That the government has cut funding to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (SYFRS) by £12.5 million since 2010; a 29% reduction in government funding.
2. That SYFRS expects a further cut of £1.4 million by 2019/20, and that SYFRS is subject to the same unclear policy of business rate retention from 2020 as local councils.
3. That these reductions in funding have resulted in a number of fire stations across the region needing to rely on Close Proximity Crewing and overnight Retained Resilience crews, and that the decision to reduce the staffing on the second appliance at Rotherham Fire Station to 11 hours a day was taken in 2013 following consultation.
4. That the number of accidental house fires in South Yorkshire decreased by 35% between 2001 and 2015, whilst the number of home safety checks delivered by SYFRS between 2006 and 2015 increased nearly tenfold.

This Council believes:-

1. That continued cuts to Fire and Rescue Services across the country puts lives at risk.
2. That prevention is better than a cure, and we welcome the work that SYFRS continues to do to prevent fires and promote fire safety.
3. In order to provide the residents of Rotherham with a safe level of fire cover, fire fighters and equipment, overnight and, reduce the level of risk to fire fighters attending a fire related incident, this Council supports the need to re-instate the second pump together with the required number of fire fighters on the night shift at the fire station in Eastwood when resources allow.

4. That any and all changes to fire services must be based on a robust risk assessment, prioritising the most effective measures to both prevent fires and to save lives.

This Council resolves:-

To support SYFRS, the Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities and the Local Government Association in pressing for a fairer funding arrangement for all fire authorities.

On being put to the vote the amendment to the motion was put and won and became the substantive motion.

On being put to the vote, the substantive motion was carried.

138. AUDIT COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendation and minutes of the meetings of the Audit Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Seconder:- Councillor Walsh

139. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 10th January, 2018 would be reported to the next meeting.

140. PLANNING BOARD

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

Mover:- Councillor Atkin

Seconder:- Councillor Tweed

141. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendation and minutes of the meetings of the Staffing Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

142. RECOMMENDATION FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE - PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2018

Further to Minute No. 60 of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 15th January, 2018 consideration was given to the Pay Policy Statement for 2018-19 which the Council was obliged to publish under Chapter 8 of the Localism Act, 2011

Resolved:- That the Pay Policy Statement for 2018-19 (Appendix 1) be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

143. LICENSING

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Board Sub-Committee and Licensing Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Ellis

Seconder:- Councillor Clark

144. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

(1) Councillor Carter explained Rotherham had got a raw deal from the Fire Authority with the cut to Rotherham's second overnight pump and asked could the Member guarantee that further cuts to frontline services in Rotherham would not happen under the current IRMP?

Councillor Atkin confirmed there were no further changes to frontline services in Rotherham contained within the 2017-20 IRMP.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked if Councillor Atkin could guarantee under the current IRMP going forward there would be no cuts given the fact that it's a living document.

Councillor Atkin confirmed under the current IRMP there were no plans to cut services in Rotherham.

(2) Councillor Carter asked would Councillor Atkin accept that the IRMP was a living document and could, therefore, be amended at any point?

Councillor Atkin confirmed he did.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter pointed out that as the IRMP was a living document, in a different financial position from when the IRMP was introduced, and therefore, services had been cut, why could the second overnight pump in Rotherham not be reintroduced.

Councillor Atkin confirmed the IRMP was a living document and within it there were recommendations. The removal of the second pump in Rotherham was a recommendation of the previous IRMP.

The recommendations within this IRMP indicated Doncaster's second pump would too be removed and Sheffield's second pump removed unless funds could be found to save it. Since the IRMP had been approved it had been reconsidered further, arising from the slightly better settlement, resulting in the additional recommendations to save the

second pumps at Doncaster and Sheffield. Unfortunately, it was not possible to look back at the second pump in Rotherham.

(3) **Councillor Carter** referred to Barnsley getting a new fire station, both Doncaster and Sheffield having their second overnight pumps protected and asked why have Rotherham's representatives allowed Rotherham's taxpayers to fund the bill for a worse service?

Councillor Atkin referred to the numerous communications that were circulated to Members and explained on last October a new fire station had been opened in Maltby which was a joint venture with the Police. This was to be officially opened by the Mayor on Monday.

Rotherham was somewhat blessed that it had four relatively new fire stations in the borough. He invited Councillor Carter to join him on a visit.

The fire station in Barnsley was in desperate need to be replaced.

(4) **Councillor Carter** asked did the Fire Authority representatives believe that Rotherham's taxpayers were getting value for money with the fire precept increasing year on year?

Councillor Atkin confirmed South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue had suffered severe cuts to its budget, having lost around £12.5 million in Government funding since 2010 – a 29% reduction. Throughout this period, the service had continually committed to providing the best service to local people within the resources available to it.

With considerable uncertainty over local Government finances beyond 2020, planned increases in the fire precept were a way of protecting the existing fire cover arrangements in place for both Rotherham and the whole of South Yorkshire.

145. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

(1) **Councillor Carter** asked which of the other Councils in the Sheffield City Region have adult burial fees higher than Rotherham?

Councillor Hoddinott expressed her frustration with the 35 year contract with Dignity, but confirmed In Rotherham an adult burial would cost £2,268 for a 100 year exclusive right to the plot.

In Doncaster, whilst the cost for an adult burial was £1,892, it only provided a 50 years exclusive right and in order to purchase a further 50 years of exclusive right, a further fee would be payable thus making the charge for a 100 year exclusive right to a plot more expensive than Rotherham.

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Barnsley and Sheffield were both less than Rotherham and Doncaster, but it was difficult to compare as different services and burial rights were provided.

In terms of questions 2 and 3 about cremation fees and fees to erect a new headstone in a local authority cemetery, Rotherham was the most expensive for those services.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked as the Council had done its own analysis with similar authorities in the country showing the figures for burial were higher than average, what actions was the Council taking to try and reduce these fees for residents.

Councillor Hoddinott explained she had made representations to Dignity in terms of the rises in the fees. Dignity were in the process of setting fees for next year and this week Councillor Hoddinott had sought assurances that fees would be frozen. No positive response had been received. The fee increases above inflation were affecting residents who had commented that burial fees were expensive compared to other places.

In a supplementary in relation to Question 2 Councillor Carter asked what would be said to residents who were choosing other Local Authority cremation services due to cost.

Councillor Hoddinott shared the same concerns and would continue to raise these with Dignity as it was known residents were choosing other places because of the cost.

In a supplementary question in relation to Question 3 Councillor Carter asked as Councillor Hoddinott was part of the administration that signed the Dignity contract, would she agree with him that that the responsibility lay with her due to the ever increasing fees.

Councillor Hoddinott shared the frustration with the contract signed previously. If she could go back and change it she would. Councillor Alam, other Councillors and herself were consistently raising the concerns with Dignity and would continue to do so regarding the large increases in services and fees. More sensible proposals were expected.

(4) Councillor Cowles referred to the reference to Dignity on the 12th January, 2018 in the Rotherham Advertiser where Councillor Alam was quoted as saying “as a Council we need to be holding Dignity to account. There’s been a failure to manage the contract”. He asked could the Cabinet Member please explain exactly what was meant by that and what was proposed to do about it?

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed this quote came from a scrutiny review session held on Dignity where Members had been asked to look in detail at the contract due to concerns raised over last few months. A number of

recommendations were suggested and a number of improvements had been put in place. There was now a Performance Management Framework enhancing the scrutiny of contract delivery which would be reporting in March, annual reports would be provided to the Council and negotiation around the times of burials. The Cabinet Member was also keen to see them implement their promises about lower cost memorials.

A further report would be presented to Improving Places Select Commission where the progress of improvements and performance would be reported. In the meantime a change of management would take place to enhance delivery and performance of the contract to give priority to this being sustainable and efficient.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles confirmed this was essentially about costs and last year had raised a similar question. At the time Councillor Hoddinott said would deal with the issue. A Director from Dignity had indicated that having signed contract the company would manage the business as saw fit. Therefore, he asked was Councillor Hoddinott deliberately misleading the public with articles and statements in the paper and if this was the case did she not think she should apologise.

Councillor Hoddinott believed she had been open and honest and shared the frustrations. She would continue to get a better deal for residents. Cost was a big issue, but not the only issue and a number of others had been raised. The change in management for prioritizing this contract would ensure that the pressure would be kept on Dignity and the changes requested completed.

Councillor Hoddinott welcomed any support from other Councillors and asked for these to be raised formally. She was determined to challenge the Dignity contract and ensure Rotherham got a good deal.

(5) Councillor Brookes was not present so her question would be responded to in writing.

(6) Councillor Hague asked was the Cabinet Member satisfied that schools were responding appropriately to allegations made by children of sexual and physical abuse committed on school premises.

Councillor Watson confirmed that he was satisfied and fortunately these types of incidents were extremely rare. However, the Council had established reporting mechanisms for the reporting, recording and referral of such cases.

Where incidents of this nature were reported to the Council, various departments within Children and Young People's Services and wider partners were alerted and, support and guidance were provided to ensure appropriate actions were taken by the school. Given the distressing nature of these types of incidents and the inevitable involvement of other

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agencies such as the Police, a discrete support package could be in place for an extended period of time within school.

Further, the Council was working with partners to ensure that schools were helped to understand the issues involved and find the right responses. The Barnardo's Reach Out project had been working extensively with schools across the borough, about seeing the signs of sexual abuse/exploitation in particular.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub provided a source of advice and help for schools, and had within it a designated Education Lead. In addition, the multi-agency CSE Evolve Team had built good links with schools across the borough, including through involving them in risk assessment processes. This all helped to ensure that children got the help they needed.

The Local Safeguarding Children's Board, LSCB, as an independent body required all schools to undertake an annual Section 11 audit, which provided a level of assurance. The LSCB provided scrutiny of all school policies and procedures in relation to any allegation of sexual or physical assault.

Where incidents involved external agencies such as the Police, confidentiality was paramount for the victim and alleged perpetrator to ensure any subsequent investigation was not compromised.

If this related to any individual experiences it was suggested that referrals be made to the Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services for immediate investigation and response.

In a supplementary question Councillor Hague asked why were parents contacting himself and the Police directly to make allegations of sexual and physical abuse which occurred on school premises. The Head Teacher and senior staff were made aware of these incidents, which were criminal, and failed to report to the Police or relevant Council departments as required to do. Bearing in mind the failure of the Head Teacher and senior staff was the Deputy Leader still satisfied that school staff were aware of their responsibilities.

Councillor Watson was 100% certain that every Head Teacher in this authority was aware of their responsibilities. If they had not reported it, this was not the same as being aware. If Councillor Hague had a specific case he could discuss this further with the Deputy Leader and/or Strategic Director to move this forward.

Councillor Hague clarified the concerns had been reported promptly to Children's Services and the Police by himself.

(7) **Councillor Sansome** asked was the Autism Strategy for all ages?

Councillor Roche confirmed that the Autism Strategy was currently under development. This would be in two phases. The first phase focused on the transitional pathway from aged 14 through adulthood. The intention was to further develop the strategy to become an all age approach covering the whole life journey once the delivery of immediate actions reached sufficient maturity to facilitate this. Work was taking place with a range of partners to develop the Strategy including the CCG and RDaSH.

In a supplementary question Councillor Sansome asked if the Cabinet Member could outline the training Elected Members would receive who would sit on the Autism Strategy Board and consider adding a representative from CAMHS to the Board as they could bring more knowledge to the table.

Councillor Roche confirmed that RDaSH were invited to sit on the Autism Strategy Board and which included a representative from CAMHS. No current forms of training for Members had been identified, but sorting this was relevant to the Strategy. Assurances had been provided that any requirement for training could be arranged directly via the Council or through agreement with the voluntary sector.

(8) **Councillor Sansome** asked given last year the TRFT had come under massive pressure, with people having to wait many hours for treatment, what assurances could the Cabinet Member give that lessons have been learnt and residents were not facing the same lengthy waiting times before treatment.

Councillor Roche explained relationships between all partners across the Rotherham health and social care system were strong.

Since 2016/17, new governance arrangements had created an Accountable Care Partnership and have formalised the ambition to work as a whole system. Rotherham CCG submitted a robust winter plan to NHS England in September 2017. This highlighted the key actions across the system to support winter pressures and build on the lessons learnt from the previous winter. This included the following which have all been implemented and were showing signs of success:-

- Investment in reablement capacity through the independent sector.
- Investment in a lead officer to support the reduction in Delayed Transfers of Care (DTC).
- Investment in Age UK to support patient discharges to their own home.
- Identification of additional winter pressures beds (care home) with agreed wrap around support from community services.
- Development of an ambulatory care unit to support appropriate assessment of patients prior to admission.

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- Development of an integrated frailty team to support hospital avoidance at the front end.

The current DTOC position was under the National Target of 3.5%. Rotherham had successfully reduced the DTOC levels from 4.1% in September 2017 to 1.8 in October and 2.4 in November 2017. Early indication of December figures was that DTOC would remain under the 3.5% target. In relation to 4 Hour Performance, the Rotherham Foundation Trust (TRFT) and the system as a whole have had a challenging winter period in line with the rest of the country. For the month of December TRFT were ranked 49th out of 137 (1 being the best, 137 being the worst). Performance (Percentage of people seen in under 4 hours) stood at 85.6%. As a comparison Doncaster was 88.5%, Barnsley 85.9% and Sheffield 85.5% so Rotherham was in line with its South Yorkshire neighbours. Obviously not satisfied with this reason for this related to Government cut backs and ultimately was placed in context. A few concerns had arisen which were being resolved.

In a supplementary question Councillor Sansome asked could the Cabinet Member confirm that avenues of communication were open with care homes that may have spare capacity and skills to deal with needs of patients.

Councillor Sansome and his ward colleagues were aware of spare capacity and skills at Mowbray Manor and it would have been helpful if the TRFT and RMBC could reduce pressure on the hospital by using up spare capacity which was available in care homes.

Councillor Roche explained care homes were only a piece of the picture and within the context of an independent NHS that had been cut back and driven towards privatisation. This was set against nursing figures nationally and the difficulty with recruitment. It was a similar picture for doctors. The issue about winter pressures and beds was a lot to do with Government priorities. The hospital trust was working with the Council in reducing transfers of care and with care homes identifying winter pressure beds. It was of primary importance to support people in their homes.

Councillor Roche was aware of bed vacancies and a system was in place to alert the Council on a daily and weekly basis as to capacity and these details were sent on to the hospital.

(9) **Councillor B. Cutts** asked could the Cabinet Member support him to reinstate the bus shelter on Wickersley Road/Middle Lane, recently demolished by a lorry? The shelter was adjacent to and, therefore, serviced the Old People's Bungalows in Durham Place.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive were responsible for the management of bus shelters. They have been notified of the situation and have confirmed that they were taking measures to address the damage to the shelter as soon as

possible. The timescale for these works was six-eight weeks. If this had not been completed Councillor Lelliott asked Councillor Cutts to contact her again and she would chase it up on his behalf.

(10) **Councillor Napper** asked who set the criteria for road safety measures, i.e. speed limits, speed humps and traffic calming measures?

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed Rotherham was part of the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership and they provided the framework for road safety measures which followed the guidance directed and regulated by the Department for Transport.

The main criteria the Council were measured and monitored on was "Killed or Seriously injured on roads".

Road safety was of particular interest to Members and as a result an information sharing seminar had been arranged for the 13th February, 2018 and provided an opportunity for members to learn more about road safety works and ask questions of officers.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper referred to the need for speed limits on roads in his own ward on Moor Lane North and Hollings Lane, both of which had had fatalities in the past and he asked if this could be looked at it rather than waiting for someone to be killed.

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed the seminar would explain how accidents statistics were used to inform the work going forward. The specific reference to the roads would be forwarded on as similar issues were of concern in Councillor Hoddinott's own ward. Speed was of concern and the Council needed to look at safety measures and working with the Police and enforcement.

(11) **Councillor Carter** asked given that a puffin crossing on Bawtry Road in Brinsworth had been agreed in principle, when would work start on this project?

Councillor Hoddinott explained that the proposal partially met the criteria. Works were prioritised for available funding and this project had not yet got to the top of the list. No timescales were available as yet.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter confirmed a further accident on Bawtry Road had taken place with significant damage to cars. Given this fact he asked the Cabinet Member where on the list was this project and would she guarantee there was funding available in the budget to get this enacted.

Councillor Hoddinott was unable to confirm the project's location on the list. In terms of funding this area had received significant cuts by the Government and was likely to disappear in the future.

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(12) **Councillor Carter** explained Jamie from Eastwood had written to him recently concerned that Eastwood was infested with rats and he asked what the Council was doing to combat this?

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed she also received reports from Jamie and gave assurances these were reported into the service to be dealt with.

The Council had carried out seven treatments for rats in Eastwood in the last six months.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked if there were seven treatments in the last six months was this an increase or decrease on the previous few years.

Councillor Hoddinott was unable to confirm and would be happy to provide this information in writing.

(13) **Councillor Carter** asked at a time when homelessness was on the increase, could the Council explain why they have failed to use existing powers to take over properties that have been empty for over two years?

Councillor Beck confirmed homelessness was a national challenge and the plight that homeless people felt every day was taken seriously here in Rotherham.

He refuted the question that the Council had failed to use existing powers. He outlined a number of actions the Council had taken with some success where enforced sale powers have been used to recover debts associated with the property, examples given were in Maltby and Dinnington where owners had sold properties they were doing nothing with.

Even at today's meeting approval had been to implement a maximum charge for empty properties.

Discussion was also to take place with over one hundred owners across the borough that had properties empty for more than two years. Occasionally the Council had stepped in to buy properties through the Housing Revenue Account and bring them back to a fit standard and decency and let them as Council provided accommodation.

Councillor Beck had had taken note that the Liberal Democrats were keen to raise the issue of empty properties and use of empty dwelling management orders. He found this hypocritical as certain facts had been eluded from the press.

Councillor Beck referred to how in 2011 the Government extended the amount of time from six months to two years for Councils having to wait to work with landlords and owners of properties to bring them back into fit use.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter referred to research done over the use of empty dwelling management orders in Rotherham which had been zero given there were over eight hundred properties and again he asked why had the Council not used these powers and more proactively got these properties into use.

Councillor Beck had no further comment.

(14) **Councillor Jepson** asked would the Cabinet Member consider allocating money within her budget for next year to cleaning and repairing street and road signs throughout the borough in order to improve its appearance and ensure the safety of its residents.

Councillor Hoddinott explained the Council already had a budget for this in terms of street signs and appreciated the importance so had no proposals to reduce. If there were any particular concerns the Cabinet Member asked Councillor Jepson to advise. Having checked with the service there were only six signs currently awaiting installation which meant the service was fulfilling the demand. Members were also advised that if there were any particular issues in their own wards they could also use their devolved budget.

In a supplementary comment Councillor Jepson explained there were a number of road signs in his own ward which were unreadable and presented the wrong impression of the borough. He was more than happy to take forward a conversation with the Cabinet Member and officers.

Councillor Hoddinott was happy to do this.

(15) **Councillor B. Cutts** asked what circumstances determined or allowed planning applications with contention to be determined “behind closed doors”, by Chair and Vice-Chair with Planning Officers when no applications, without contentions were determined by the Planning Committee “in public”?

Councillor Lelliott explained planning applications were determined in accordance with the Council’s adopted scheme of delegation.

Section 101 of the Local Government Act (1972) allowed a Local Planning Authority to arrange for the discharge any of its functions by a committee, sub-committee, or an officer or by any other local authority. The Act stated that it was in the public interest for the local planning authority to have effective delegation arrangements in place to ensure that decisions on planning applications, that raised no significant planning issues, were made quickly and that resources were appropriately concentrated on the applications of greatest significance to the local area.

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In summary the scheme of delegation delegated decision making to officers for a wide range of planning matters including to approve small scale applications where no objections have been received and to refuse small scale applications (even where objections have been received).

Applications where there have been no more than five objections are considered in conjunction with Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Board. Major applications, which have strategic implications for the Borough and any application with more than five objections (where the recommendation was to approve) were automatically referred to Planning Board.

Members were advised that Rotherham's Planning Department was the number one in the country for both major and minor applications.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cutts referred to his own circumstances which had occurred over the last two months and was unable to absorb the answer.

Councillor Lelliott reconfirmed Section 101 of the Local Government Act (1972) allowed a Local Planning Authority to arrange for the discharge any of its functions by a committee, sub-committee, or an officer or by any other local authority. The Act stated that it was in the public interest for the local planning authority to have effective delegation arrangements in place to ensure that decisions on planning applications, that raised no significant planning issues, were made quickly and that resources were appropriately concentrated on the applications of greatest significance to the local area.

(16) Councillor Carter asked if Sheffield and Barnsley could manage to fix street lights within a working day, why were Rotherham residents having to wait three times longer, and were therefore getting a worse service?

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed the average time for the Council to fix a street light was around two days and was happy to report that the street lighting service was a finalist for the Association of Public Service Excellence.

It was difficult to compare repairs as some were easy to repair if it was the light and the column, but there could be delays if the repair related to supply when this would have to be passed to Northern Power Grid. Their reported longest delay had been twenty days and these were circumstances beyond the Council's control.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked about the statistics received which had related to the financial year 2016/17 and asked if Rotherham residents were having an improvement in their service, which was still behind Sheffield and Barnsley.

Councillor Hoddinott pointed out that the servicing of street lighting was improving. The Council had approved an invest to save bid to replace street lighting with LED lights. These lights were lasting longer with less on them to fix.

(17) **Councillor Jepson** referred to last year an area of woodland at Greenlands Park, North Anston was sold off by the Council. He asked could the Cabinet Member ensure that some of the proceeds of this sale were reinvested in the park to provide additional recreation facilities for the benefit of the local community.

Councillor Yasseen explained the area of woodland that that Councillor Jepson was referring to had not yet been sold. Asset Management had been working with Greenspaces following a request from a resident that backed on to the area of woodland in question, to purchase an area of woodland that was not accessible from the park.

A report was to be considered at the next Asset Management Board (12th February, 2018) that would consider this request, and if supported would be considered by the Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transportation (under the scheme of delegation). Consultation has taken place with the Ward Members and local groups and these comments were included in the report following consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Members.

Capital receipts were not ring-fenced for specific requests and such funding went in to central finance in order to meet the Capital receipts target. Funding for recreation facilities and related work should come through the usual route and via requests to the relevant service.

Ward Members were advised that they could use their devolved budget to enhance their local areas, such as green spaces, for local benefit and every effort was being made to work more proactively with Ward Councillors.

In a supplementary comment Councillor Jepson confirmed he was not aware the sale had not gone through. He asked if some money could be used to top up the green spaces to get something done in the park. This was a Council owned park and he hoped some of the money could find its way back in.

Councillor Yasseen would forward on the request.

(18) **Councillor Carter** asked if the administration believed that the Kingdom litter enforcement trial had been a success in cleaning up the town centre?

Councillor Hoddinott was pleased to confirm it had. This had been considered at an excellent cross party scrutiny session that had come up with a similar view and made some excellent recommendations about the way forward.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked, given the decrease in footfall and the withdrawal of some retail, did the Cabinet Member think the Kingdom enforcement trial was distracting people from the town centre.

Councillor Hoddinott had received feedback from residents around litter and behaviour of a small minority of people deterring them from the town centre. Councillor Lelliott was dealing with the regeneration and provided feedback from the Voice meetings.

The trial had addressed some of the social concerns around litter enforcement and combined with the introduction of the public space protection order over street drinking would seek to assist Rotherham with becoming a thriving town centre going forward.

(19) Councillor Cowles referred to the 'Local Plan' and the 'Masterplan' progressing, but whenever there was discussion or in the press about the future developments the Cabinet Member for Housing referred to the use of developers to do the work and asked why could we not do more ourselves with more local involvement of Rotherham people?

Councillor Beck explained the majority of the new properties were delivered by the private sector. This was the case nationally and in Rotherham.

It was noted that as part of the site clusters programme, which would deliver 217 new homes, the Council as the developer and the land owner was employing Wates Living to use local labour and local apprentices to build the new homes.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles sadly reported the message from Government was clear - cut until you fail and even if there was an alternative Government any increase in funds could be short term.

It was time to look to the future. Councillor Cowles assumed the Cabinet Member had heard of ARCH and other property companies and if not, why no. This was a strategic partnership with the Council in Northumberland.

Councillor Cowles had not had an opportunity to speak to the Council, but he would. He was aware of some issues, but these were complete. This company was to be closely aligned to Northumberland County Council and operated as a commercial scheme, not only driving economic regeneration in the north, but providing the returns on the investment. It

helped protect services and budgets and supported homes and jobs and had returned £5 million to the Council.

Councillor Cowles asked, before everyone screamed about Carillion, why Rotherham could not do the same with this property company, which was subject to public scrutiny.

Councillor Beck was familiar with what described. A piece of work had been undertaken to look at the business case for a special housing delivery vehicle and to look at ways it had been done. A proposal was certainly not off the table and the Council was interested in exploring and keen to adopt innovative way of delivering new housing. He considered the points raised by Councillor Cowles to be fair and would look to see how the approach could be broadened to the housing market in Rotherham.

(20) **Councillor Cusworth** referred according to the ONS “An estimated 1.9 million adults aged 16 to 59...experienced domestic abuse in the last year” March 2017 and asked what was Rotherham doing to prevent incidents of domestic abuse, support victims of abuse and aid prosecutions for domestic abuse related incidents.

Councillor Hoddinott advised there were over 6,000 people in Rotherham affected by domestic abuse that reported it and that was a rise on the year before.

The Council and its partners were acutely aware of the prevalence of domestic abuse and were working hard to address the issue and provide support services. A Domestic Abuse Strategy had recently been agreed to improve the co-ordination between the service. Service users had reported how excellent services were, but this was not always joined up and recognised. A part of this a charter had been developed with partners about expectations of how organisations dealt with domestic abuse and what training and support was available.

Next month would see the launch of a perpetrator programme and it would be interesting to see how this progressed.

Scrutiny were thanked for the work they had undertaken on domestic abuse, for raising issues and shaping the strategy.

Tomorrow a peer review was also taking place with regards to the domestic abuse service and how to work together with partners. This was the first of its kind in the country and officers were thanked for their involvement in this. It was important to seek assurances about how services were developed.

(21) Councillor Williams referred to the announcement earlier last year that firms such as McLaren and Boeing would be building factories in the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District. This was obviously welcome news and asked was there any evidence to show these investments were having a wider beneficial impact on the local economy?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed Rotherham had a proud history of engineering excellence – these investments showed how the work being delivered through the Economic Growth Plan was taking the local economy forward, building on Rotherham’s traditional strengths and creating the necessary conditions to attract high value wealth creating jobs in advanced manufacturing which have spill over benefits across the borough.

Investment like McLaren’s was expected to generate a further £100 million of additional Gross Value Added for the economy and create at least 370 jobs including 250 in the McLaren production facility at the AMP in Rotherham. Boeing was expected to add £70 million of GVA and create 260 jobs resulting from direct employment and in the supply chain and service sector.

In a supplementary question Councillor Williams was pleased to learn that big international companies like Boeing were calling Rotherham their home and asked the Cabinet Member if she could explain what the impact had been for our employment levels here in Rotherham.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the investments were fantastic and showed that Rotherham was the eighth fastest growing economy in the country. Figures released today indicated that the employment rate had risen by 2.6% from 71% to 73.6% and the gap between the economic activity rate of the UK had narrowed from 5% to 3.1%.

(22) Councillor Carter referred to the Council’s own forecasts that “fly-tipping incidents across the borough were projected to increase by 5% during the current financial year” and asked how did the Council plan to combat this?

Councillor Hoddinott explained this was a projection and everything would be done to ensure this was not the case. Fly tipping was a priority in Labour’s manifesto and stressed the importance of keeping to manifesto commitments, so over the last two years, the Council’s enforcement capabilities had increased significantly in terms of methods to detect and deter fly tipping and additionally new legislation allowing for:-

1. Quicker enforcement through £400 fixed penalty notices for some offences.
2. Use of new powers to seize and keep vehicles used in fly tipping offences to prevent further offences.

During the current financial year the Council has seized fourteen vehicles suspected of being involved in fly-tipping; successfully prosecuted seven companies/individuals for fly-tipping with more awaiting hearings at Court over the next few months.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked given the changes to the waste collection services over the coming months would the Cabinet Member agree that there was a risk of further fly tipping.

Councillor Hoddinott pointed out changing the waste collection service was not a license for fly tipping and there was no excuse for the behavior now or in the future. Clear take action would be taken against people who were fly tipping offenders.

(23) Councillor Sansome asked what impact would the collapse of Carillion have on the residents of the borough.

Councillor Lelliott advised she was not aware of any direct contracts between Carillion and the Council. It was understood that Network Rail had Carillion as the main contractor for the Tram Train between Sheffield and Rotherham. The SYPTTE have reported that the remainder of the contracts for the tram train would continue to be implemented and the scheme completed.

In a supplementary question Councillor Sansome asked, taking into account the few number of contracts at risk, was there a future position where those contracts would be brought in-house and would the Cabinet Member lead on a task force on the fallout of the small numbers involved to protect employment and business.

Councillor Lelliott pointed out it was early days and further investigation was required. Carillion was a major employer and with offices in Sheffield and employees from Rotherham the Council shared the concerns and was supportive of those affected.

(24) Councillor Carter referred to April from Manvers who felt she had to take her plastics to her mum's house in a neighbouring Council area so that it could be easily recycled. He asked would the Member agree that not recycling plastic at the kerbside meant that Rotherham's recycling policy only benefitted the few, not the many?

Councillor Hoddinott was sorry that April felt she had to transport her plastic. There was provision in the borough for her to take her plastic to recycle at the household recycling centres and bring-sites. Consultation was currently taking place on the waste collection service. A number of responses had been received and would be responded to accordingly.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked, assuming the changes go through and the general bin size goes down, how would the Cabinet Member respond to residents whose household were unable to fit

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all their general waste in their black bin and did not have the facility to visit the recycling centres by car.

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed residents who say they were struggling at the moment from the modelling for a normal family should be able to cope with a smaller bin size with the waste they produced. Other areas had introduced smaller bins and that had brought about an increase in recycling because of the need to give careful consideration as what went into the bin and the need to separate this out.

There had been a number of responses on this issue and Councillor Hoddinott was keen to understand why and further consideration was needed to look at how to reduce the amount of waste produced in the first place. Comments about supermarkets and packaging were a national issue and action was needed to see how this too could be reduced.

(25) Councillor Carter asked did the Cabinet Member believe that the parking enforcement regime was a success in the town centre?

Councillor Lelliott agreed in general.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked, given free parking on the lead up to Christmas which potentially reduced to mitigate the impacts of Parkgate and Meadowhall, would the Cabinet Member look to introducing this all year round to increase footfall in the borough.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed she would consider all proposals. Free parking was currently available all year round with two hours free parking on the Forge Island site.

(26) Councillor Jepson had already left the meeting so was unable to ask his question. A response would be provided in writing.

(27) Councillor Cusworth asked could the Cabinet Member please tell her what the Council was doing to support the start-up and growth of small businesses in the borough?

Councillor Lelliott advised the Council provided a start-up advisory service through RiDO which was embedded in the business centre offer. At any one time there was over 120 businesses resident in four business centres - Fusion at Magna, Moorgate Crofts, Matrix at Dinnington and Century at Manvers. These businesses provided over 1,000 local jobs.

The three year survival rate of businesses in RiDO business centres was 79.6% which was significantly higher than the national figure of 60.8%. In the nine months from April, 2017 the team had worked with 182 potential new entrepreneurs and helped 21 businesses to start up.

At 93% occupancy the centres were near to capacity which was why the construction of a new centre had been included in the Economic Growth Plan. The Council was currently working on opportunities to draw down external grant funding to help deliver this.

(28) **Councillor Cowles** asked at the end of the consultation process into waste management, would the Cabinet Member please hold a Council seminar covering the top ten issues raised by the public and whatever innovative solution had been reached to solve them. He gave an example of a Council who had six bins causing utter chaos on collection day along some roads.

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed that a six bin proposal was not an option.

In terms of the consultation process it was not thought that a seminar was the right environment for such a discussion, but the information from the consultation survey, drop in sessions and public feedback would be published. The final proposals would also be subject to a thorough discussion in the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board prior to any Cabinet decision being taken.

(29) **Councillor B. Cutts** withdrew this question at the meeting.

(30) **Councillor B. Cutts** asked as a result of the experience with grooming and exploitation had the Council made any representation to Government to request a National Standard for the control of taxi licensing to allow us to prevent “none locally licensed” taxis operating in Rotherham.

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed Elected Members and officers and also victims and survivors have taken every opportunity to raise concerns regarding the lack of national standards and the ability of “out of town” vehicles to operate in Rotherham. Councillor Ellis as Chair of Licensing was invited to provide information on the work that had been undertaken to date.

Councillor Ellis confirmed this was an issue and she and the members of the Licensing Board found it increasingly frustrating that out of town vehicles could operate in the borough. However, the Board had been diligent in taking up this cause and had spoken to many people and organisations including the Local Government Association, Department for Transport, Transport Minister, Members of Parliament and the Deputy Mayor of London to lobby Government for a change in the legislation.

Even yesterday Rotherham’s dedicated Licensing Manager was in London at a task group talking to people about experiences here in Rotherham. He was also sharing the top three issues Government were being lobbied for which were cross border hiring, the problems it brought, a national database and outdated legislation. Those people on the

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Licensing Board and who had attended the training, were aware that the legislation was outdated and not fit for purpose.

Rough calculations of audience figures where Rotherham had been invited to deliver presentations at national training events and conferences reached around 200-300 authorities and 60-70 councillors. Other Councils and Councillors had also visited Rotherham and shared experiences and were particularly interested and engaged.

Rotherham had not waited for Central Government to change legislation, but had been proactive in dealing with problems, contacting other authorities and taking the initiative.

Information had been shared about Rossendale who had gone as far as to change their Licensing Policy to reflect vehicles had to be predominantly used within its borough and action taken to drivers for those who went beyond a thirty mile radius.

Rossendale had not gone as far as Rotherham with the installation of CCTV in its cabs, but it was pleasing to learn they had reviewed their policy and like Rotherham were seeking to protect all members of the public using taxis and taxi drivers themselves.

In a supplementary question Councillor B Cutts was pleased to see things were going in the right direction. As these subjects were very important he asked if more information could be provided or a seminar held to share some of the good news stories and best practice.

Councillor Ellis noted the request and confirmed all the Licensing Board and Licensing Committee received regular updates and training. Whilst the process was not yet perfect the Licensing process in Rotherham was very much improved system and service.

(31) **Councillor Jepson** had already left the meeting so was unable to ask his question. A response would be provided in writing.

(32) **Councillor Napper** asked what was the remit of RMBC's new officer to investigate extremism in Rotherham?

The Leader confirmed that if he had understood the question correctly, it related to the job of a new Community Co-ordinator funded by the Counter Extremism Unit who was funding a network of 42 Community Co-ordinators in key local authority areas, of which Rotherham was one due to the difficulties experienced such as the far right marches in previous years.

The role was not to investigate extremism, but to help build stronger community resistance to it, in whichever communities it may occur. The Leader was sure the officer would be happy to meet with Councillor Napper if that would be helpful.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper asked if this covered all forms of extremism of whichever quarter it came from.

The Leader confirmed it did.

(33) **Councillor Napper** asked since 2015 how many jobs have been lost in RMBC and how many management post jobs have been employed?

Councillor Alam confirmed since 1st April, 2015 there had been a reduction of 313 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) posts. During this period there have been 291 redundancies and these have been posts at all levels across the organisation. The Council would have to have a more detailed look at each redundancy to establish how many were management posts, this work was underway and Councillor Alam would provide Councillor Napper with a direct response.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper asked how many new management posts had the Council engaged since losing lower paid positions.

Councillor Alam confirmed a number of senior managers had been recruited and would include this with his written answer.

(34) **Councillor Simpson** asked could the Council update residents of Brinsworth and Catcliffe about the use of land adjacent to exit 33 of the M1, especially with regard to pollution above and below ground.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed an outline planning application had been submitted to the Council, and was currently being considered, for a proposed motorway service area at Junction 33. This will be considered at Planning Board sometime around April/May this year.

The application was accompanied by a number of detailed technical reports. The application and details relating to pollution could be accessed as part of the public on the Council website

(link: <http://rotherham.planportal.co.uk/?id=RB2017/1347>)

146. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.