

Councillor Chris Read – Leader of the Council

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Mr Peter Thirlwall
6 Pinchwell View
Wickersley
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By email peter.thirlwall@talktalk.net

27th September, 2019

Dear Mr Thirlwall

Supplementary Question – Council 4th September

I apologise for the delay in providing you with a written response to the supplementary question which you asked at council on 4th September.

As advised at the meeting the responsibility lies with individual councillors to update their Register of Interest. I would not be involved in setting any other member's Register of Interests. What action the Brexit Party Group may have taken to instruct their members to update their registers at any time would obviously not be known to me. Moreover I was not and am not aware of any Registers of Interest being changed without the authorisation of the individual concerned.

During the meeting I reiterated the need for councillors to ensure that membership of any and all political parties be detailed on their Register of Interest. If evidence became available to suggest that an individual Register of Interest had been tampered with without the knowledge of the councillor I would encourage them to bring this to my attention, or I suppose if they preferred to raise it formally with the Chief Executive, to allow the matter to be investigated and appropriate action taken. To date no member has brought such an issue to my attention, but if evidence of this comes to light then clearly that would be of concern.

If a councillor hadn't updated their Register of Interest within the mandatory twenty-eight days then this would be something that could be reported to the Standards and Ethics Committee, and any consequential action would be taken in line with Standards procedures.

As far as I can tell, the Brexit Party Group appropriately became the main opposition group when its members transferred over from UKIP. I therefore cannot make any request for Special Responsibility Allowance which Councillor Cowles is receiving as Leader of the opposition party to be recovered. I should add that whether members were registered as members of UKIP, the Brexit Party, another party or none, they could still as I understand it be members of the Brexit Party Group on the Council. Not all Groups seem to follow the equivalent of the rule that the Labour Group would have, that you would have to be a member of the Labour Party to be a member of the Labour Group.

I hope the above adequately answers the points you raised.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Read". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Councillor Chris Read,
Leader of Rotherham Council**