

Councillor Chris Read – Leader of the Council

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15 June 2020

Mr G Dempsey
By email

Dear Mr Dempsey

Council Meeting – 3rd June 2020

Thank you for submitting a question for the above Council meeting. As advised by the Mayor during the meeting a written response is provided below.

“I note that the Deputy Leader admitted to Channel 4 that he had not read all of the Jay and Casey reports; and that some who attended the seminar about CSE in April 2005 are still councillors. Since August 2014, what has been the total amount paid by RMBC for the costs of CSE in legal fees, compensation, and insurance?”

In relation to the costs:

- Legal costs paid so far are £1,666,230.
- We are not able to disclose the value of compensation payments made at the current time because it has been determined that disclosure of this information would breach the privacy rights of individuals and the health and safety of those individuals. This position has been previously been accepted by the Information Commissioner following consideration of the relevant legislation and circumstances.
- There are no specific or additional insurance costs in relation to this.

However, I should also respond to your allegations about the Deputy Leader. Cllr Watson was asked by Channel 4 News on the day of publication of the Casey Report in 2015 whether he had read it. He was on his way into the town hall to be briefed about the report at the exact moment he was asked, and answered truthfully – that he hadn't, yet, read it. Of course, within a matter of hours of the question being asked, he had done so. There has never been a suggestion since its publication that he hasn't read the Jay Report. Attempting to take that out of context is slanderous.

As Cabinet Lead for Children's Services over the last five years, Cllr Watson has been at the forefront of ensuring improvements to Rotherham's Children's Social Care. He has constantly championed that agenda and contributed to our Children's Services moving from "Inadequate" to "Good" at a pace that has been envied by many other places in the country. As you know, Ofsted formally reported that those services had been "transformed" during the time that he has been the Cabinet member. Our vulnerable children and families are safer as a direct consequence. I trust that you will recognise his achievements and wish to place on the record an apology for your misleading comments.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Chris Read
Leader of Rotherham Council