

Councillor Chris Read – Leader of the Council

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5th June 2026

Cllr Zachary Collingham
Via email: Zachary.collingham@rotherham.gov.uk

Dear Cllr Collingham

Council Meeting – Wednesday 20th May 2026

Thank you for your question as part of my statement at the Council Meeting on Wednesday 20th May 2026, where I agreed to share the findings of the internal review of the recent vehicle fire involving a refuse collection vehicle.

The internal review has now been completed, involving officers from Environmental Services, Fleet, and the Council's Health and Safety team.

Due to the severity of the fire damage, it has not been possible to establish a definitive root cause. However, the review indicates that a mechanical failure, potentially within the hydraulic system, is the most likely cause.

Prior to the incident, a fault (rattling noise) had been reported. The vehicle continued to operate for a short period following this report, which may have contributed to the escalation, although this cannot be confirmed. However, this is not unusual practise to have the vehicle if working and no warning lights to report back to depot.

Whilst the exact cause cannot be determined, the review has identified several areas where improvements can be made to further strengthen safety and operational processes. These include:

- Reviewing and improving defect reporting and escalation procedures
- Strengthening communication between drivers and supervisory staff
- Providing additional fire safety training for operational staff
- Continuing to monitor and review learning through regular service meetings

The Council's Health and Safety team is supporting this work to ensure appropriate standards and compliance.

I would like to reassure you that the crew involved acted appropriately in safely evacuating the vehicle and contacting emergency services, and no injuries were sustained.

The Council remains committed to learning from this incident and taking all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of similar occurrences in the future.

For reference, you may also wish to know that the order for replacing the Council's fleet of refuse collection vehicles has now been placed following the tendering process.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Chris Read
Leader of Rotherham Council