

**CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS GROWTH AND REGENERATION
3rd November, 2014**

Present:- Councillor Beck (in the Chair); Councillors Sansome and Whysall.

I21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Business Growth and Regeneration held on 10th October, 2014 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

I22. ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES - REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Finance Manager on the performance against budget for the Environment and Development Services Directorate Revenue Accounts as at 30th September, 2014 and providing a forecast outturn for the whole of the 2014/15 financial year. Members noted the forecast outturn position of an under-spend of £296,000 for the Environment and Development Services Directorate, based on expenditure and income as at 30th September, 2014.

During discussion of this report, Members raised the following salient items:-

- : Asset Management, Audit and Insurance;
- : Business Unit (eg: costs of employee training);
- : Communications;
- : Regeneration, Planning, Customer and Cultural Services;
- : Streetpride (eg: specific pressure in Network Management services);
- : possible reductions in car parking income.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the latest financial projection against budget for 2014/15, based on actual income and expenditure to 30th September, 2014, as outlined in the submitted report, be noted.

(3) That the submitted report be referred to the Self Regulation Select Commission for information.

I23. PETITION - REQUEST FOR THE PROHIBITION OF BADGER CULLING ON COUNCIL-OWNED LAND

Further to Minute No. 7(1) of the Annual Council Meeting held on 6th June, 2014, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Ecology Development Officer, concerning the receipt of a petition, containing 32 signatures, from residents of the Borough area, requesting

the Council to prohibit the culling of badgers on Council-owned land and to invest in vaccination programmes locally.

The report stated that the petition is connected to recent Government-sponsored badger culling trials in Gloucestershire and Somerset which aim to reduce the incidence of Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) in these high-risk areas. Members understood that approximately 150 similar petitions have been submitted to local authorities in England and Wales.

Available research on the matter and information about the risk of bTB in Rotherham has been investigated; the South Yorkshire Badger Group (SYBG) and both local Wildlife Trusts ((i) Yorkshire and (ii) Sheffield and Rotherham) have been consulted. There is no single method that will sufficiently reduce the wildlife reservoir of bTB and prevent the spread of bTB between badgers and with cattle. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) Bovine TB Information Note 04/13 confirms that South Yorkshire is currently a low risk area for bTB and the SYBG has stated that there is no recorded incidence of bTB in badgers within Rotherham.

The report stated that DEFRA has mapped areas of high risk and low risk and has also identified 'edge' areas where enhanced cattle controls will be put in place to contain and reverse the spread of bTB (a map of the 'edge' areas was displayed at the meeting). A number of Wildlife Trusts operating in edge areas in England are considering badger vaccination programmes. The closest 'edge' area to Rotherham is the Derbyshire/Staffordshire border and, in addition to the enhanced cattle controls, the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is funding and delivering a five years' programme of badger vaccination.

Members acknowledged the legal advice that, irrespective of the scientific, technical or moral arguments relating to culling, it is clear that, at present at least, culling badgers or disturbing their setts is an illegal act. This advice is pursuant both to the general provisions protecting wild animals set out in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the specific provisions relating to badgers in the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Members also noted that this matter may require further consideration by the Council, in response to any advice which may be issued by central Government in the future.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the petition be received and its contents noted.

(3) That the culling of badgers on land in the ownership and control of this Council shall be prohibited.

(4) That this Council shall not invest in a local badger vaccination programme at the present time.

(5) The lead petitioner be informed of the decisions shown above.