

COUNCIL MEETING
4th March, 2015

Present:- The Mayor (Councillor John Foden) (in the Chair); Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Andrews, Astbury, Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Buckley, Burton, Clark, Cowles, Currie, Dalton, Doyle, Ellis, Finnie, Gilding, Godfrey, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Havenhand, Hoddinott, Hunter, Jepson, Johnston, Kaye, Lelliott, McNeely, Middleton, Parker, Pitchley, Read, Reeder, Reynolds, Robinson, Roche, Roddison, Rushforth, Sangster, Sansome, Sharman, Sims, Smith, Steele, Swift, Turner, Tweed, C. Vines, M. Vines, Wallis, Watson, Whelbourn, Whysall, Wootton and Wyatt.

A104 COUNCIL MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28th January, 2015, be approved for signature by the Mayor, subject to an inclusion to Minute No. A94(17) where the member of the public in question requested the comment made by the Mayor be included prior to the commencement of the answer "The Mayor pointed out that Councillor Steele would be answering this question not Councillor Hussain".

Mover:- The Mayor
(Councillor J. Foden)

Seconder:- Deputy Mayor
(Councillor M. Clark)

A105 COMMUNICATIONS

(1) The Mayor reported on the announcement by the Queen appointing Mr. Andrew Coombe DL FCA as Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of South Yorkshire to succeed Mr. David Moody when he retired on 7th April, 2015.

The Mayor asked the Council to join him in thanking Mr. David Moody on the excellent work he had undertaken and wished him well in his retirement and in congratulating Mr. Andrew Coombe on his appointment.

(2) The Interim Chief Executive submitted the following petitions which had been referred to the appropriate Directorates for consideration:-

- Containing 11 signatures from residents of Greasbrough and Munsbrough who are concerned about road safety issues on Fenton Road, Greasbrough and ask the Local Authority do something to improve road safety on Fenton Road.
- Containing 1023 signatures requesting "We the people of Rotherham demand that all Rotherham Labour Councillors stand down from their Council seats and call a re-election with immediate effect – you have betrayed our children".

(3) The Interim Chief Executive submitted apologies for absence from Councillors Cutts, Dodson and J. Hamilton.

(THE MAYOR AUTHORISED CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING URGENT ITEM IN ORDER TO SHARE THE DIRECTIONS OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999 AND THE EDUCATIONAL ACT 1996.

A106 THE EFFECT OF DIRECTIONS MADE IN RELATION TO ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2015

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, which set out the details of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Education's Directions under Section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 and Section 497A(4B) of the Education Act 1996 in relation to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to secure its compliance with the best value duty and to secure that the Authority's children's social care functions were performed to the required standard.

The report set out in detail the nature of the Directions, introduced the Commissioners, their roles, powers to be exercised and the decision-making and accountability of the Commissioners, roles of the Leader, Cabinet and Members, appointment of statutory officers, appointment to other bodies, Directions to the Authority, duration of the intervention and order moving Rotherham Council to all out elections from 2016.

The representations made by the Council requested further information from the Department for Communities and Local Government relating to the constitutional implications and practical operation of the proposed intervention.

The Mayor invited Lead Commissioner Sir Derek Myers to say a few words.

Commissioner Sir Derek Myers introduced his fellow Commissioners, Stella Manzie who would be full-time and take over from the Interim Chief Executive from the 16th March, 2015, and Mary Ney, who would be part-time, and exercise all functions in respect of community safety, partnership with the Police and all licensing activity.

As Lead Commissioner, Sir Derek Myers would be overseeing the team's function and report periodically to the two Government departments with a view to convincing them the full range of powers and accountabilities could be restored and returned to Councillors in due course.

Commissioner Sir Derek Myers and his fellow Commissioners thanked staff and Councillors they had met so far for the warm welcome.

Councillor Gilding also wished to offer his welcome to the Commissioners, but was saddened that the town had hit rock bottom and now required Commissioners to run its services.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents and effects of the Directions dated 26th February, 2015 be noted.

(2) That the appointed Commissioners in the exercise of their functions as described in the Directions dated 26th February 2015 be fully supported.

Mover:- The Mayor
(Councillor J. Foden)

Seconder:- Deputy Mayor
(Councillor M. Clark)

A107 LEADERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to the proposed leadership arrangements with the appointment of Councillor Christopher Read as Leader of Rotherham Borough Council.

Councillor Read explained that he had mixed emotions at becoming Leader as he was proud of Rotherham, its people, history and heritage.

Like most Members he felt the weight of the scandal that had become known simply as “Rotherham” and his thoughts were with the victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation and for what had gone wrong, as highlighted by both the reports by Professor Jay and Louise Casey, and how not enough had been done so far to put things right.

Change had already begun; meetings were webcast, there would be no Leader’s car, there was to be a future non-Labour Mayor and some of the victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation were receiving funded support.

Councillor Read was pleased to announce his new Cabinet:-

Deputy Leader	Councillor Gordon Watson
Cabinet Member	Councillor David Roche
Cabinet Member	Councillor Denise Lelliott
Cabinet Member	Councillor Kath Sims

The Council was now dealing with the past, but must look to the future and welcomed the Commissioners to their first full Council meeting.

Shortly the public of Rotherham would have their say about the future direction of the Council. Structures may have to be reformed with no return to systems that had previously failed.

Councillor Parker welcomed the changes, but questioned the Leader’s appointment of Deputy Leader who had denied on camera about the extent of child sexual exploitation.

Councillor Watson explained the situation which led to him appearing on Channel 4, how he was unable to express his comments, how the footage had been edited and how he was not, or ever said, he was in denial about child sexual exploitation.

Councillor Reynolds asked for clarification as to why the Council required a Leader and Deputy Leader and was informed by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services that this was a statutory requirement and formed part of the Local Government Act, 2000.

Resolved:- That Councillor Christopher Read be elected as Leader of Rotherham Borough Council.

Mover:- Councillor Ellis

Seconder:- Councillor Gosling

A108 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

(1) Mr. P. Thirlwall asked could the Leader please confirm that Officers and Elected Members of the Council could no longer travel first class when travelling outside Rotherham on Council business?

The Leader confirmed this was the case. If details were required about the Allowances Scheme this could be provided.

In a supplementary question Mr. P. Thirlwall welcomed this and other approaches about first class travel, which would be shared by the ratepayers of Rotherham, along with the reduction in Cabinet Members, Members' allowances and the scrapping of the Imagination Library.

The Leader was pleased to confirm the action being taken.

(2) Mr. R. Bartle referred to both verges of Worrygoose Lane, Whiston, which were strewn with all types of litter and asked when were the Council going to treat this issue seriously to convince residents that they intended to do something to deal effectively with the problem?

The Leader confirmed that Worrygoose Lane was programmed for litter picking on the 16th (and probably 17th as well) of March. In addition, the Commissioners have recommended to Council the Budget which included an additional £200k for Street Cleansing; part of this would be used to increase the frequency of litter-picking on rural verges such as Worrygoose Lane.

In a supplementary question Mr. R. Bartle was pleased to hear that the programme of litter picking was for this month and asked the new Leader if these issues would be taken seriously and efforts made to clean up not just the Town Centre, but the whole of the Borough and if whether the additional funding for road repairs could be extended to Whiston?

The Leader hoped that the measures to be announced today would go some way to addressing the problems that have been mentioned.

Councillor Cowles asked if the new Leader was happy to put together a cross party group of people to look at litter to find some effective way of dealing with the problem appropriately, including looking more closely at the opening hours of the recycling centres.

The Leader confirmed this indeed would be an excellent topic for a scrutiny review and for a cross party approach to look at the issue. However, discussions would have to take place with the Commissioners to ascertain if this could be taken forward on a cross party basis. It must also be borne in mind that given the reductions in Local Government finances any such recommended action would have to be judged as a priority, but the approach was welcomed.

Councillor Parker asked if consideration was to be given to bringing the recycling centres back in-house as they were not easy to use and the people administering their operation were running them for profit and if the restrictions on the use of vans could be lifted, which would alleviate some of the problems with fly tipping.

The Leader confirmed that should a review take place these matters would be considered.

Councillor Reeder referred to emails she had sent regarding litter, spitting and dog fouling and highlighted that the culprits were not just young people, but adults and asked the Leader if this could be looked at seriously.

The Leader confirmed that should a review take place these matters would be considered.

Councillor Parker asked for the Chamber's indulgence to confirm he was no longer a member of the UKIP Political Party and had been expelled from the National Party.

(3) Mr. M. B. Cutts asked as from June, 2014 how many serving Councillors were employed by the state, industry, commerce, retired or unemployed and in order to give the opportunity to someone employed in industry or commerce sector, why not re-arrange Council Meetings to be held in the evenings, out of normal working hours?

The Leader thanked Mr. Cutts for his question. All of the Council's democratic arrangements would be reviewed following the finding of the Casey review and the appointment by the Government of Commissioners. Your suggestion would be considered as part of that review.

(4) Ms. P. Copnell asked were the Council aware of the problems they were creating for elderly/vulnerable tenants, if they intended to close the communal centres and laundry facilities and who would pay for washing machine fixtures/fittings for elderly tenants who were told they did not need them when signing their sheltered housing agreement?

Councillor Godfrey explained that a comprehensive review of neighbourhood centres located within an aged persons housing complex had been undertaken following declining use of the facilities and customer requests to opt out of the associated charges. A thorough consultation exercise for each of the centres, including communal lounge areas, guest bedrooms and laundry facilities had been undertaken, to determine proposals relating to future use. The consultation process informed the recommendations based upon use and demand.

Accordingly, a number of neighbourhood centres and laundry facilities have been approved for removal as they were not well used and the majority of tenants supported an alternative use and removal of the associated charge.

The tenants affected by removal of the laundry facilities were being offered alternative provision including alterations to their kitchen areas to enable them to incorporate a machine and low cost payment options for washers and dryers through the furnished homes scheme.

In a supplementary question Ms. P. Copnell asked how did the Council expect people to pay for the package of support and be able to understand the detail in the tenancy agreement when the majority of tenants had difficulty remembering day to day activities. The Council were in danger of doing the same to the elderly through neglect as they had to the young people leaving them open to abuse, loneliness and isolation.

Councillor Godfrey reiterated the changes were as a result of the responses from tenants, but appreciated there may be some tenants who were not happy. In terms of the provision of the furnished home scheme there were a large number of tenants who had taken this up. In terms of the tenancy agreement it was acknowledged that there were a number of elderly tenants who found it hard to read and difficult to understand and action would be taken to contact them direct.

A109 PROPOSED REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX FOR 2015/16

Further to Minute No. 5 of the meeting of the Commissioners' held on 27th February, 2015 consideration was given to the proposed Revenue Budget for 2015/16 based on the outcome of the Council's Financial Settlement.

The Leader of the Council outlined the budget proposals following a series of successive budget cuts and which required a further £23 million in savings.

The large majority of the savings proposed did not come directly from frontline services, but subjecting local Councils to further cuts was not sustainable, but the task was to deliver on the priorities of the public with a greatly diminished resource to drive forward the change that was needed.

Top of the priority list was Children's Safeguarding, which not only protected the core but increased funding in three key areas:-

- £234,000 for the development of outreach youth work based provision to engage with young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation.
- £390,000 for additional, permanent, social workers to make sure children at risk are seen by Children's Services as quickly as possible.
- £200,000 additional support for Child Sexual Exploitation victims and survivors.

£125,000 of short term funding announced after the Jay Report, was allocated to a number of local charities to increase capacity quickly to provide some of the support that victims and survivors need. Within this budget the amount would be increased and mainstreamed to help to provide increased certainty over the coming months and years.

The funding would be allocated based on the needs analysis currently being conducted and informed by the views and experiences of victims and survivors themselves.

Local third sector groups were being encouraged to bid for further grant funding from the Government, but this was no substitute for the measures being proposed.

To partly fund the measures above, it was proposed that Council Tax rise by 1.95% and amounted to 31p per week for the average Rotherham household in Band A.

To offset the potentially substantial one-off costs arising from the Jay Report a £8.4 million "Transformation Reserve" was proposed in order to meet these potential costs.

As the Government grants declined, the Council was increasingly dependent on retained business rates and reducing costs by helping people back to work. It was, therefore, proposed that:-

1. No revenue budget cuts to Economic Development staff.
2. To continue as a Living Wage employer to 1,500 Council staff, subject to agreement from the Commissioners.
3. To continue to provide Council Tax Support to ensure that those on the very lowest incomes continued to receive a 91.5% discount.
4. To maintain a Local Welfare Fund for those in real financial crisis situations.

The choices being proposed would prevent net job losses.

In response to views of residents about litter, it was proposed to restore £200,000 of funding to Streetpride to address basic issues of weeds and litter.

The capital budget proposals would also see an extra £5 million spent on road maintenance and resurfacing over the coming two years and doubles the existing planned expenditure, and should see an estimated 50 km of roads being repaired.

The majority of the savings required were from back office and changing financial arrangements, remodelling Waste PFI costs, capitalising the REWS and Assistive Technology budgets, changes to the way Drug and Alcohol Services were organised, closure of the Imagination Library and the reduction in funding to City Learning Centres.

Furthermore, savings would be realised from the Members' budgets, which would see the withdrawal of the Leader's car, reductions in the Mayor's Civic budget and reducing allowances of all Councillors to the South Yorkshire average.

Discussions had also taken place with the Boundary Commission, but it was too late for them to make changes now in time for 2016's all-out elections, but this would form the basis of some consideration for the 2020 elections.

Testimony was paid to the hard work of the former Deputy Leader and her colleagues, in producing the budget being proposed today which was recommended for the approval of members.

Councillor Turner pointed out that the 1.95% increase in Council Tax had not been acrossed across the Council, but only from the majority party.

Councillor Hoddinott pointed out the difficult position for the Local Authority, not only had it had five years of successive cuts, but next year would be facing 28% less Government funding. The challenges facing the Council were huge, but this budget had been developed having listened to the concerns of local people.

The publication of the Jay and Casey Reports had resulted in measures being put in place to support the budget moving forward. It was crucial that the support was provided for the victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation, that additional staff were provided and outreach work was further developed.

The proposals were funded by the increase in Council Tax, but whilst not taken lightly were commended for approval.

Councillor Reynolds pointed out that the raising of Council Tax would only affect the less well off and compared this to the cost of traffic light installation work at Pool Green Roundabout.

The Mayor and Councillor Beck provided clarification on the funding allocation for Pool Green Roundabout and also Old Flatts Bridge, the majority of which was provided by the external Pinchpoint Fund of around £8 million and the Council's £1 million contribution.

Councillor Whelbourn sought advice on whether the withheld monies associated with the two funding bids would now be released and received confirmation that this would take place shortly.

The Leader reconfirmed the budget proposals as outlined above which would bring much needed funding to victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation and improvements to traffic infrastructure.

The Mayor used his discretion to allow Opposition Members to put forward an alternative budget for Rotherham, despite the debate having been concluded.

Councillor Vines, UKIP Opposition Leader, proposed an amendment to the Rotherham's Budget for 2015/16 believing Rotherham people had suffered enough and needed a lift to brighten up and for people to be proud of their town.

The savage cuts and the uncertainties and unknowns moving forward required the need to look to find other funding.

To this end, fully costed proposals were proposed which would not add any extra burden to the taxpayer or the finances of this Council and would assist to restore pride by including:-

- Removing some shrub beds which were notorious for being litter traps and replace them with well-maintained full colour flower beds.
- Grassed areas kept cut to a neat and tidy standard.
- Clamping down on litter and dog fouling by being more proactive and having a lower tolerance on the perpetrators and increase the number of fixed penalty fines.

- Installing colourful flower filled hanging baskets on town centre lamp post's
- Installing planters around the Town to give further colour.

More funding would be sought to provide help victims of child sexual exploitation to give them the courage and strength to come forward to bring their perpetrators to justice. Consultation with victims and their families was important and their views would contribute to the support they required moving forward. It was, therefore, proposed that a grant based ringfenced fund be set aside to help fund such an organisation. This would be in addition to any other funding streams identified in the main Council budget.

Further opportunities should be explored to offset the funding gap and shortfall and this should be mainly funded by Elected Members with a reduction in the allowance to show real commitment and leadership.

The proposed budget would see savings of £474,500 through Member-related activity with extra service commitment of the same amount for grass cutting and ground works, shrub, lamp post and planters, victim engagement and an income feasibility study. This did not include any increase in Council Tax.

The Leader raised a number of issues with the alternative budget proposals and pointed out that under the original budget proposals funding for victims and survivors was being mainstreamed with additional support for more social work staff. The alternative budget proposals fell short of this and on this basis was unable to support the alternative proposals.

Councillor Currie was of the view that the alternative budget was not sustainable and only by raising the Council Tax could the proposals move forward.

Councillor Reynolds suggested a more cross party approach should have been developed.

Alternative Budget - amendment to the original motion:-

Mover:- Councillor C. Vines

Seconder:- Councillor Cowles

The amendment to the motion was put to the vote, and was defeated.

Resolved:- (1) That a General Fund Revenue Budget for 2015/16 of £203.554m to be allocated to services be approved.

(2) That the re-designation of the Commutation Adjustment Earmarked Reserve to the 'Transformation Reserve' earmarking these funds to meet the likely significant costs and potential liabilities facing the Council to enable it to positively respond and address the improvements required as stated in the Professor Jay, Ofsted and Louise Casey Reports in order to bring about a 'fit for purpose' Council, at the earliest opportunity be approved.

(3) That an increase in the Council Tax of 1.95% in respect of this Council's own Budget giving an annual Band D Equivalent Council Tax of £1,277.73 be approved.

(4) That the additional Council Tax generated from a proposed 1.95% increase (£590k) and the net additional funding announced in Rotherham's Final Local Government Settlement (£434k) be approved and invested into support for Child Sexual Exploitation victims and survivors (£200k), additional social workers to make sure children at risk are seen by Children's Services as quickly as possible, (£390k), development of outreach youth based work provision to engage with young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (£234k) and for improving grounds maintenance and the general cleanliness and attractiveness of the Borough (£200k).

(5) That the comments and advice of the Strategic Director of Resources and Transformation, provided in compliance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, as to the robustness of the estimates included in the Budget and the adequacy of reserves for which the Budget provides be noted and accepted.

Mover:- Councillor Read, Leader

Seconder:- Councillor Watson,
Deputy Leader

(The Mayor – Councillor Foden, Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Andrews, Astbury, Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Buckley, Burton, Clark, Currie, Dalton, Doyle, Ellis, Godfrey, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Havenhand, Hoddinott, Johnston, Kaye, Lelliott, McNeely, Pitchley, Read, Robinson, Roche, Roddison, Rushforth, Sangster, Sansome, Sharman, Sims, Smith, Steele, Swift, Tweed, Wallis, Watson, Whelbourn, Whysall, Wootton and Wyatt voted in favour of the original budget)

(Councillors Cowles, Finnie, Gilding, Hunter, Jepson, Middleton, Parker, Reeder, Reynolds, Turner, C. Vines and M. Vines voted against the original budget)

A110 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX FOR 2015/16

Consideration was given to the report submitted by the Strategic Director of Resources and Transformation which set out details of the calculation of the Council Tax for Rotherham's parished and unparished areas for the financial year 2015/16, and included both the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire and Rescue Authority Precepts.

Resolved:- (1) That the Net Revenue Budget for the Council in 2015/16 of £203.554m, which after receipt of Central Government Grants and use of the Collection Fund leaves £83.663m to be funded be approved.

(2) That in accordance with Section 34 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), £1,277.73 as its basic amount of Council Tax for the year (using the formula in Section 34 of the Act) for an unparished area.

(3) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 31B to 36 of the Act as set out in Section 3 of Appendix A for the year 2015/16:-

(a) £205,782,191 being the net aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) and 31A (3) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils (Gross Council Expenditure (less income and Specific Grants other than the Business Rates Retention Scheme and other Settlement Funding Assessment grants (£203,554,000) plus Parish Precepts (£2,228,191).

(b) £119,891,408 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of the Business Rates Retention Scheme and other Settlement Funding Assessment grants.

(c) £2,000,000 being the amount which the Council estimates will be payable in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax Balance).

(d) £85,890,783 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3a above exceeds the aggregate of 3b and 3c above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).

(e) £1,311.7599 being the amount at 3d above (Item R divided by Item T 1a above) calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act as the relevant basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts).

(f) £2,228,191 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act as per section 1b above.

(g) £1,277.7300 being the amount at 3e above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3f above by the figure at 1a above (item T in the formula in Section 31B (1) of the Act calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the relevant basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no parish precept relates. (Band D Council Tax for Rotherham MBC services).

(h) The following amounts be calculated by the Council as the relevant basic amounts of Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate, being the amounts given by adding the amount at 3g above to the amount of the special items in Appendix B Section 1, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act: _

Parished Areas	£
Anston	1,370.80
Aston-cum-Aughton	1,338.06
Bramley	1,327.34
Brampton Bierlow	1,324.60
Brinsworth	1,371.41
Catcliffe	1,379.00
Dalton	1,330.84
Dinnington St. John's	1,339.21
Firbeck	1,336.76
Gildingwells	1,277.73
Harthill with Woodall	1,345.22
Hellaby	1,313.70
Hooton Levitt	1,277.73
Hooton Roberts	1,297.64
Laughton-en-le-Morthen	1,326.47
Letwell	1,304.68
Maltby	1,320.60
Orgreave	1,315.57
Ravenfield	1,312.29
Thorpe Salvin	1,318.62
Thrybergh	1,344.85
Thurcroft	1,352.28
Todwick	1,344.14
Treeton	1,339.52
Ulley	1,371.85
Wales	1,352.43
Wentworth	1,309.46
Whiston	1,325.17
Wickersley	1,334.49
Woodsetts	1,376.06

(4) Notes that the major precepting Authorities (the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire and Rescue Authority) have stated the following amounts respectively in Precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act – South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner a Band D Tax of £148.16 and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority a Band D Tax of £66.32:-

Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
South Yorkshire Police & Crime Commissioner	98.77	115.24	131.70	148.16	181.08	214.01	246.93	296.32
South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority	44.21	51.58	58.95	66.32	81.06	95.80	110.53	132.64

(5) That the Town and Parish Council Precepts for 2015/16 be noted as detailed in Section 1b of Appendix A total £2,228,191. The increase (+3.4%) in the Average Band D Council Tax for Town and Parish Councils results in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £1,311.76:-

Parished Areas	Tax Base	Total Precept (£)
Anston	2,793.64	260,000
Aston-cum-Aughton	4,104.77	247,657
Bramley	2,201.15	109,200
Brampton Bierlow	1,197.91	56,141
Brinsworth	2,268.11	212,474
Catcliffe	567.12	57,432
Dalton	2,353.55	125,000
Dinnington St. John's	2,208.32	135,764
Firbeck	132.99	7,850
Gildingwells	40.12	0
Harthill with Woodall	614.43	41,470
Hellaby	240.48	8,651
Hooton Levitt	52.76	0
Hooton Roberts	80.37	1,600
Laughton-en-le-Morthen	434.69	21,189
Letwell	64.94	1,750
Maltby	3,895.09	167,000
Orgreave	367.55	13,908
Ravenfield	999.32	34,538
Thorpe Salvin	196.30	8,026
Thrybergh	769.93	51,674
Thurcroft	1,848.29	137,790
Todwick	635.31	42,188
Treeton	825.41	51,000
Ulley	63.30	5,958
Wales	1,932.75	144,376
Wentworth	533.36	16,926
Whiston	1,429.94	67,834
Wickersley	2,528.18	143,490
Woodsetts	582.79	57,305
	35,962.85	2,228,191

(6) That the amounts presented in Section 3 of Appendix B for both unparished and parished areas as its Aggregate Council Tax Requirement (including South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Authority Precepts) for the year 2015/16:-

Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Aggregate Council Tax Requirement (Unparished Parts of the Council) (Appendix A5)	994.80	1,160.61	1,326.41	1,492.21	1,823.81	2,155.42	2,487.01	2,984.42
Anston	1,056.85	1,233.00	1,409.14	1,585.28	1,937.56	2,289.85	2,642.13	3,170.56
Aston-cum-Aughton	1,035.02	1,207.53	1,380.04	1,552.54	1,897.55	2,242.56	2,587.56	3,105.08
Bramley	1,027.87	1,199.20	1,370.51	1,541.82	1,884.44	2,227.08	2,569.69	3,083.64
Brampton Bierlow	1,026.05	1,197.06	1,368.07	1,539.08	1,881.10	2,223.12	2,565.13	3,078.16
Brinsworth	1,057.25	1,233.47	1,409.68	1,585.89	1,938.31	2,290.74	2,643.14	3,171.78
Catcliffe	1,062.31	1,239.38	1,416.43	1,593.48	1,947.58	2,301.70	2,655.79	3,186.96
Dalton	1,030.21	1,201.92	1,373.62	1,545.32	1,888.72	2,232.13	2,575.53	3,090.64
Dinnington St John's	1,035.79	1,208.43	1,381.06	1,553.69	1,898.95	2,244.22	2,589.48	3,107.38
Firbeck	1,034.15	1,206.52	1,378.88	1,551.24	1,895.96	2,240.69	2,585.39	3,102.48
Gildingwells	994.80	1,160.61	1,326.41	1,492.21	1,823.81	2,155.42	2,487.01	2,984.42
Harthill with Woodall	1,039.79	1,213.10	1,386.40	1,559.70	1,906.30	2,252.91	2,599.49	3,119.40
Hellaby	1,018.78	1,188.59	1,358.38	1,528.18	1,867.77	2,207.38	2,546.96	3,056.36
Hooton Levitt	994.80	1,160.61	1,326.41	1,492.21	1,823.81	2,155.42	2,487.01	2,984.42
Hooton Roberts	1,008.07	1,176.10	1,344.11	1,512.12	1,848.14	2,184.18	2,520.19	3,024.24
Laughton-en-le-Morthen	1,027.29	1,198.52	1,369.73	1,540.95	1,883.38	2,225.82	2,568.24	3,081.90
Letwell	1,012.77	1,181.57	1,350.37	1,519.16	1,856.75	2,194.35	2,531.93	3,038.32
Maltby	1,023.38	1,193.95	1,364.52	1,535.08	1,876.21	2,217.34	2,558.46	3,070.16
Orgreave	1,020.03	1,190.04	1,360.05	1,530.05	1,870.06	2,210.08	2,550.08	3,060.10
Ravenfield	1,017.84	1,187.49	1,357.13	1,526.77	1,866.05	2,205.34	2,544.61	3,053.54
Thorpe Salvin	1,022.06	1,192.41	1,362.76	1,533.10	1,873.79	2,214.48	2,555.16	3,066.20
Thrybergh	1,039.55	1,212.81	1,386.07	1,559.33	1,905.85	2,252.37	2,598.88	3,118.66
Thurcroft	1,044.50	1,218.59	1,392.68	1,566.76	1,914.93	2,263.10	2,611.26	3,133.52
Todwick	1,039.07	1,212.26	1,385.44	1,558.62	1,904.98	2,251.35	2,597.69	3,117.24
Treeton	1,035.99	1,208.67	1,381.33	1,554.00	1,899.33	2,244.67	2,589.99	3,108.00
Ulley	1,057.55	1,233.81	1,410.07	1,586.33	1,938.85	2,291.37	2,643.88	3,172.66
Wales	1,044.60	1,218.71	1,392.81	1,566.91	1,915.11	2,263.32	2,611.51	3,133.82
Wentworth	1,015.95	1,185.29	1,354.61	1,523.94	1,862.59	2,201.25	2,539.89	3,047.88
Whiston	1,026.43	1,197.51	1,368.58	1,539.65	1,881.79	2,223.94	2,566.08	3,079.30
Wickersley	1,032.64	1,204.76	1,376.86	1,548.97	1,893.18	2,237.41	2,581.61	3,097.94
Woodsetts	1,060.35	1,237.09	1,413.81	1,590.54	1,943.99	2,297.45	2,650.89	3,181.08

(7) That, in accordance with the principles determined by the Secretary of State and set out in the Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases (Principles) (England) Report 2015/16, that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's relevant basic amount of Council Tax for the year 2015/16 as defined by Section 41 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 is not excessive.

Mover:- Councillor Read, Leader

Seconder:- Councillor Watson
Deputy Leader

(The Mayor – Councillor Foden, Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Andrews, Astbury, Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Buckley, Burton, Clark, Currie, Dalton, Doyle, Ellis, Godfrey, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Havenhand, Hoddinott, Johnston, Kaye, Lelliott, McNeely, Pitchley, Read, Robinson, Roche, Roddison, Rushforth, Sangster, Sansome, Sharman, Sims, Smith, Steele, Swift, Tweed, Wallis, Watson, Whelbourn, Whysall, Wootton and Wyatt voted in favour of the proposals)

(Councillors Cowles, Finnie, Gilding, Hunter, Jepson, Middleton, Parker, Reeder, Reynolds, Turner, C. Vines and M. Vines voted against the proposals)

A111 PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2015/16 TO 2017/18

Further to Minute No. 4 of the meeting of the Commissioners' held on 27th February, 2015 consideration was given to a report that detailed how, in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance, the Secretary of State's Guidance on Local Government Investments, CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities and with Council policy, the Director of Financial Services was required, prior to the commencement of each financial year to seek the approval of the Council to the following:-

- i. The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2015/16 to 2017/18 (Appendix A)
- ii. A Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement which sets out the Council's policy on MRP (Appendix A)
- iii. An Annual Treasury Management Strategy in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management including the Authorised Limit (Appendix B)
- iv. An Investment Strategy in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) investment guidance (Appendix B)

Despite this being a technical and complex report the key messages were:-

- a. Investments – the primary governing principle would remain **security** over return and the criteria for selecting counterparties reflect this. Cash available for investment would remain low, resulting in low returns.
- b. Borrowing – overall, this would remain fairly constant over the period covered by this report and the Council would remain under-borrowed against its borrowing requirement due to the higher cost of carrying debt. New borrowing would only be taken up as debt matures.
- c. Governance – strategies were reviewed by the Audit Committee with continuous monitoring which included Mid-Year and Year End reporting.

Resolved:- (1) That the prudential indicators and limits for 2015/16 to 2017/18 contained in Appendix A to the report be approved.

(2) That the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement contained in Appendix A which sets out the Council's policy on MRP be approved.

(3) That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 to 2017/18 and the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator (Appendix B) be approved.

(4) That the Investment Strategy for 2015/16 to 2017/18 (Appendix B – Section (e) and Annex B1) be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Read, Leader

Seconder:- Councillor Watson,
Deputy Leader

A112 CAPITAL MONITORING AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16 - 2017/18

Further to Minute No. 6 of the meeting of the Commissioners' held on 27th February, 2015 consideration was given to a report which provided details of the current forecast outturn for the 2014/15 programme and enable the Council to review the capital programme for the financial years 2015/16 and 2017/18.

The proposed Capital Programme for 2015/16 to 2017/18 ensured that the Council's capital expenditure plans were aligned with its strategic priorities and vision for Rotherham.

Specifically the three year Capital Programme would deliver on the following key Council priorities:-

- £15.9m investment in highway infrastructure projects and maintenance to improve the Borough's roads.
- £12.4m investment in school buildings to provide additional pupil places and improve existing building conditions.

- £4.2m investment in street lighting to enable revenue savings by investing in new lighting technology.
- £92.1m investment in new housing and improvements to existing stock and the estate infrastructure.

Resolved:- (1) That the updated 2014/15 to 2017/18 Capital Programme be approved. This programme incorporated expenditure funded through grant allocations announced since the last report was produced, and includes the 2017/18 Housing Investment Programme funded through the Housing Revenue Account.

In particular, Members should note the following major additions to the capital programme and supplementary approvals to existing schemes:-

- Additional expenditure on Highway Maintenance and Improvements to Non-Principal Roads funded by Prudential Borrowing (£3m in 2015/16, £2m in 2016/17). Recommended for approval.
- Waste Management – Capitalisation of Wheelie Bins (£0.181m in 2014/15 and £0.181m in 2015/16). Proposed as part of the 2015/16 Revenue Budget.
- Expansion of the Town Centre Street Market (£0.048m in 2014/15). Approved by the Cabinet Member for Business Growth and Regeneration, 12th January 2015.
- Reroofing works to Moorgate Crofts (£0.051m in 2014/15). Approved by the Director of Planning and Regeneration under delegated powers, 5th November 2014.
- Assistive Technology (£0.510m in 2015/16 and £0.400m in 2016/17). Proposed for approval as part of the 2015/16 Revenue Budget.
- Rotherham Equipment and Wheelchair Service (REWS) Equipment (£0.190m in 2015/16 and £0.190m in 2016/17). Proposed for approval as part of the 2015/16 Revenue Budget.
- Furnished Homes – Capitalisation of Furniture and White Goods – (£1.2m in 2014/15; £2.88m in future years). Proposed for approval as part of the 2015/16 Revenue Budget.

Where not funded by grant or by the Service from its own resources, the revenue implications from these schemes have been built into the Council's 2015/16 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Planning assumptions.

Mover:- Councillor Read, Leader

Seconder:- Councillor Watson,
Deputy Leader

A113

EXTENSION OF BUSINESS RATES TRANSITIONAL RELIEF FOR 2015/16

Further to Minute No. 7 of the meeting of the Commissioners' held on 27th February, 2015 consideration was given to a report detailed how in

the 3rd December Autumn Statement for 2014 the Government announced that Transitional Rates Relief was being extended for two years until March, 2017 and that Local Authorities would be compensated by grant for the cost to them of any relief granted. Guidance on the extension of Transitional Relief was issued in January and it was estimated that up to seventeen properties in Rotherham would be affected and with a maximum rates relief awarded in 2015/16 of £20k of which Rotherham MBC's share would be £10k.

In addition, the guidance asked Local Authorities to consider granting discretionary relief to child care providers, but did not offer to reimburse Local Authorities for the cost. Councils were also reminded to notify child care providers of the other rates reliefs available to them (e.g. Small Business Rates Relief and Charity Relief) and of the importance of prompt payment.

Resolved:- (1) That an extension be granted of Transitional Rates Relief to all qualifying premises within the Council area, subject to satisfying the State Aid requirements.

(2) That the Council does not change its existing Policy with respect to discretionary rates relief for child care providers, but continues to assess cases for discretionary rates relief individually.

Mover:- Councillor Read, Leader

Seconder:- Councillor Watson,
Deputy Leader

A114 CABINET MINUTES

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet (Section C) (pages 145C to 157C) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Hoddinott

Seconder:- Councillor Beck

A115 DELEGATED POWERS

A number of questions were raised in relation to the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet Members as follows:-

Minute No. D38 (Financial System Managed Service Renewal) – Councillor Cowles referred to the reasons for outsourcing an I.T. system when the systems in Riverside House appeared to have the capacity and could provide accommodation and asked if this was not considered, then why not, why the Council were not considered to have the expertise and was it not time to look at a fully integrated system?

Councillor Hoddinott pointed out that the Council did not always have the expertise to provide support, but drew attention to the questions raised in the Minute and particularly Recommendation No. 1 where written confirmation was requested that no alternative provider could provide the

required level of support.

It was also pointed out that consideration was already being given as to ways that the Council could become smarter with technology to engage with residents and work had commenced on the refresh of the I.T. Strategy, which was due later this year. External support from providers was only sought when the expertise was not available in-house.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles referred to the inexperience of decision makers, the apparent lack of expertise in the Council and believed, having visited Riverside House, that the provision was only functioning at a third of its capacity.

Councillor Hoddinott pointed out that Opposition Members could have attended the delegated powers meeting and added their view, but if they felt the decision was incorrect, could have called it in, but maintained it was the right decision for the Council to make.

Councillor C. Vines challenged the participation of Opposition Members in meetings and criticised the call-in process.

Councillor Steele referred to a decision that was called in by the Opposition and heard on the 13th February, 2015.

Councillor Hoddinott referred to 23rd January, 2015 meeting of her own where Councillors Parker and C. Vines were invited to contribute.

Minute No. D34 (Waiver of Standing Orders for Post Abuse CSE Support) – Councillor Parker expressed his concern that the funding referred to in Recommendation No. 3 was being pooled to commission further voice and influence work and these would simply become talking shops which was not addressing the problem nor giving the victims the support they required.

He pointed out that the proposed work was to better understand the effects of Child Sexual Exploitation on minority ethnic groups and communities, including Asian and Roma when the majority of the girls exploited were of white origin. Would this not simply divide a community? Reference was again made to a previous question where he had asked if there were any Roma families in this community in Rotherham married to underage children and claimed the answers provided were nonsense as it was illegal in this country and marital status details and dates of birth would be recorded on the passports of those entering the country.

Councillor Hoddinott explained that the funds were required to commission further voice and influence work to listen to those victims and survivors and to ensure the services provided met the needs of all. Going forward it was important to hear the voices of victims and survivors longer term. This was a really important piece of work which was why the urgent business powers meeting was called at short notice.

In terms of the minority groups it was important that they be engaged and not ignored and that their need for support be heard.

The issue of underage marriages within the Roma community was difficult to tackle, but was a serious issue that needed to be addressed.

In a supplementary question Councillor Parker again reiterated his concern about talking shops, but believed his question about the numbers of underage children being married within the Roma community had never been fully answered and found the situation unacceptable.

Councillor Hoddinott agreed that any marriage involving an underage child was acceptable and knew it was taking place. However, there was a need to engage and understand the community and work with the Police in order to seriously tackle the issue.

Councillor Reynolds applauded the extra money being provided, but suggested that the Opposition be more included so that the Council could work together to safeguard young people.

Councillor Gilding pointed out that marriage to an underage person was a crime and this was a matter for the Police not the Council to take action.

Councillor Read, not wishing to score any political points, drew attention to the alternative budget submitted by the Opposition which reduced the amount of funding to the voice and influence work, which was vital.

Minute No. D35 (Child Sexual Exploitation Support Services Strategy) – Councillor Jepson asked for an update on the Ministry of Justice funding bid.

Councillor Hoddinott advised that the Ministry of Justice funding bid was currently being put together by a consortium of various partner agencies. The outcome on whether the bid was successful or not would be announced at the end of March, 2015.

Members of the Opposition were invited to submit letters of support for this funding to come to Rotherham.

Minute No. F45 (Questions from Members of the Public and the Press) – Councillor Cowles referred to the £155,000 being charged by the Winterhill Management Team and the involvement of the Strategic Director and the External Consultant who found the original decision to appoint Winterhill a sound one, but then claimed the solution did not work and believed the Consultant's advice was worthless.

Minute No. F50 (Proposal to increase the Published Admission Number at Brinsworth Whitehill Primary School) – Councillor Parker, having spoken

to Admissions, was informed there were no problems with children obtaining a school place in Rotherham. However, this was not the case as children in his own Ward were finding they could not get a place at Wickersley Northfield or Flanderwell and children were being home tutored as they could not get a place at their preferred school.

The Leader agreed there was a problem in the Flanderwell area and specific information could be clarified in writing.

The Director of Children Service's had previously commented on a similar issue at the Commissioners' Meeting on the 27th February, 2015 and confirmed Rotherham was not facing the same kind of difficulties as they were in the South East where there was an acute pressure on school places. 97% of secondary school parents were likely to have access to a good school and 90% of parents were also given their first preference of schools.

In a supplementary question Councillor Parker expressed his concern about those parents who were not getting their first choice school and children then being home tutored. There was a serious problem in the Flanderwell/Wickersley area for school places and the figures were, therefore, wrong.

Councillor Hoddinott pointed out that Rotherham had very good schools and the Council must not be complacent, but these types of issues were picked up within the Capital Programme report to invest into school buildings, which recommended that action be taken at schools to increase school places to help deal with the rising numbers for the future and would not like to see a repeat of problems that had occurred across the United Kingdom.

Minute No. F54 (Esuite Data Management System) – Councillor Cowles referred to the cost of this support and maintenance contract of £19,000 for hosting computer systems and the space in Riverside House. He referred Councillor Hoddinott to an earlier question about her lack of expertise and her Adviser's lack of expertise on the Council and suggested she found people who had the expertise as hosting the platform was "kids stuff".

Minute No. I45 (Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium) – Councillor Middleton referred to the importance of the Athletics Stadium, but could not understand the two paragraphs in the Minute where it referred to the use of the Stadium for the last two years since 2013 had been because of finance. Some finance had now been found and appeared to suggest doing the same thing. What was different in 2015 over what had happened over the last two years and could the Council be certain it would be getting sufficient access to this facility for the people of Rotherham.

Councillor Beck shared the same sentiments, but referred to the savings

made over the last few years by the reduction in staff at the Athletics Stadium, move towards the Rotherham Harriers taking greater ownership and responsibility and how in the longer term the Harriers would bear more of the cost of the Stadium and income generation to ensure the cost to the taxpayer was reduced and this facility was able to remain open and accessible at all times.

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of Cabinet Members as listed below be adopted:-

- Deputy Leader – Pages 27D to 35D (Section D)
- Children and Education Services – Pages 40F to 53F (Section F)
- Environment – Pages 31G to 34G (Section G)
- Adult Social Care and Health – Pages 41H to 49H (Section H)
- Business Growth and Regeneration – Pages 26I to 32I (Section I)
- Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods – Pages 60J to 67J (Section J)

Mover:- Councillor Read, Leader

Seconder:- Councillor Watson,
Deputy Leader

A116 AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Chairman advised that this would be his last Council Meeting and wished to place on record his thanks and appreciation to his fellow Audit Committee Members past and present for the learning he had received and to officers and to reiterate to the public of Rotherham how sorry he was for the inadequacies that had been uncovered and the suffering caused.

Councillor Cowles wished to confirm that it had been a pleasure to work with the Chairman and enjoyed the experience.

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee (Section N) (Pages 22N to 28N) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Sangster

Seconder:- Councillor Kaye

A117 LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE

Minute No Q32 (Application for the Review of a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver's License) – Councillor Gilding commended the Licensing Board Sub-Committee on the action they had taken and the reasons they had given for the revocation of a licensed driver in Rotherham and hoped that this practice would continue in the future.

Councillor Reynolds asked if there was any truth in the rumour that the Council was to sub-contract its licensing activity and was informed by the Chairman that she had no knowledge of such a request.

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Board Sub-Committee (Section Q) (Page 23Q) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Dalton

Seconder:- The Mayor
(Councillor John Foden)

A118 HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Councillor Hoddinott wished to draw attention to Minute No. S62 (Urgent Care Performance) following the request by the Chairman for an urgent report and the concerns that the hospital had failed to achieve its 95% target in Accident and Emergency. Yorkshire Ambulance was also reporting that over a third of the red call outs did not get a response in eight minutes. Information was also heard from the Police who were regularly reporting they were transporting people to hospital because of concerns over the Ambulance Service.

The Commissioners were asked to carry on the work and look to address these concerns.

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board (Section S) (Pages 64S to 77S) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Doyle

Seconder:- Councillor Hoddinott

A119 PLANNING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports and minutes of the meetings of the Planning Board (Section T) (Pages 40T to 47T) be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Atkin

Seconder:- Councillor Tweed

A120 SCRUTINY UPDATE

Councillor Steele provided an update on activity and achievements so far for each of the Select Commissions:-

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Board completed an intensive and in-depth scrutiny of plans to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, over two full days, during December 2014. The Management Board have agreed the final report and it will be fed into the new decision making arrangements for the Council over the coming weeks.

- Self Regulation completed an urgent piece of work into Standing Orders for the Council – focusing on Member and public questions in Council, and have recommended a further stage to this work in the near future.
- Health Select Commission have completed a key review on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and this would also be progressed through the new decision making processes.
- Work programmes for all of the Select Commissions have progressed via the scheduled meetings including supporting the local economy, commissioning, Sheffield City Region, Town Centre Safety and Safeguarding (Adults and Children).

Councillor Wyatt also wished to point out the work of scrutiny and particularly the performance of the Ambulance Service as referred to under the Health and Wellbeing Board minutes and whether the duty was to look at all providers of health service. He asked that the Ambulance Service be one such area to be looked at when Scrutiny was resumed.

Councillor Reynolds referred to the issue behind the ambulance service aging fleet which could not be replaced and the costs associated with a fully kitted ambulance. Only by dealing with the core problem would the difficulties be resolved.

He also expressed his concerns over not receiving responses about Child Sexual Exploitation from the Police or the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Steele took on board all the concerns, but pointed out that the Police and Crime Commissioner and District Commander Jason Harwin had been present at the two day Scrutiny meetings to answer questions, but like everyone else in this Chamber wished to see more arrests and children protected.

Resolved:- That the Scrutiny update noted.

A121 QUESTIONS TO FORMER CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

(1) Councillor C. Vines referred to a resident stating that the car park now run by the Council at the old Tesco Forge Island Site did not meet legal requirements which were:-

240 cm width
480 cm length

The length is only 410 cm.

Was this car park operating in accordance of the legal requirements?

The Leader confirmed the minimum car parking bay dimensions were set out in The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions which was a Statutory Instrument. However, this document prescribed dimensions for on-street parking bays and not for off-street bays as was Forge Island car park.

Checks had been made with both Barnsley and Doncaster Councils and they have confirmed that there was no legislation for the prescribed dimensions of off-street parking bays.

Clearly, off-street car parks needed to ensure that the parking bays were fit for purpose and that vehicular/pedestrian movement around the site was safely achieved.

From taking over the day-to-day operational management of Forge Island in November 2014 no incidents had been reported.

(2) Councillor C. Vines asked with proposed Landlord Licenses being introduced only in certain areas could he be told how many Council-owned properties would fall into these proposed areas and how much this would cost the Council in License fees and who would be the enforcer tasked with enforcing the License requirements?

The Leader confirmed the Selective Licensing Scheme related only to properties owned by private landlords and, therefore, there would be no charge to any Council-owned properties.

In a supplementary question Councillor C. Vines asked if this was discriminatory?

The Leader confirmed that there were separate regulations that governed Council-owned properties.

(3) This question was not accepted.

(4) This question was not accepted.

(5) Councillor Cowles asked did the Leader agree that local people should receive, at the very least, the minimum wage for their labour?

The Leader explained he did agree.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles stressed the importance as two meetings ago he raised a concern about the minimum wage not being enforced by Government. The answer given was about the positives of the Living Wage, but no answer was given for this matter to

be looked into locally to ensure the minimum wage was being paid in this region. Rachel Reeves made the same point on Question Time on the 26th February, 2015, as had Councillor Cowles. She also stated that there had been few prosecutions. Given the current situation Councillor Cowles asked if a cross party group could look into this issue, which may involve working with other agencies, but it was important that this issue was looked at locally to ensure minimum wage was being paid in this region.

The Leader considered this to be an excellent topic for a cross party scrutiny review, but pointed out subject to the arrangements may be something that could be looked at.

The Leader referred to some recent prosecutions by the Government where companies were not paying the minimum wage, which did include a prominent Rotherham employer. The Leader would be writing to the company to raise concerns about this in due course.

Councillor Sangster pointed out that the Audit Committee had previously asked about making sure all Council contractors were paying the minimum wage and a request was made for this to be written into contracts.

(6) Question withdrawn.

(7) Councillor Cowles asked did the Leader feel that officers were fit for purpose, who took the decisions with regard to spending public money officers or Cabinet Members, and who was accountable for such expenditure?

The Leader pointed out the overwhelming majority of Council Officers turned up for work and performed a very good job. Where there were officers who were not fit for purpose there was a disciplinary procedure in place. If there were any concerns over Elected Members these could be taken up with the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer. The issues raised now fell within the remit of the Commissioners.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles explained the purpose of this question was around the waste of public funds on the employment of consultants in order to advise on the viability of Magna. He quoted the Leader's response to a local activist indicating a preference for external consultants to look at Magna's viability rather than using well qualified Council staff with the experience and asked if this was reasonable. Staff had been recruited to ensure probity and best value for money and this is simply baseline expertise. This again demonstrated that the tradition of throwing unnecessary ratepayers money at external consultants was embedded in the Labour hegemony.

The Leader acknowledged the political difference of opinion about who should carry out the viability assessment for Magna. Bringing in an independent person, who had no involvement in Magna, was a sense of

responsibility and a good use of public money.

Councillor Reynolds referred to those employed at Magna, including the Chief Executive, Marketing Director and the Strategic Direction Director - why could they not make it work and why did the Council have to keep bailing them out when every other business in Rotherham would welcome an injection of cash to keep it solvent?

The Leader pointed out that the Council was a third shareholder in Magna and was why the use of an external Consultant would be used to look at their plans moving forward and to assess them. Based on the independent assessment the Commissioners would make a decision on whether to loan money to Magna in the future or allow them to fold. If allowed to fold, there will be additional costs to the Council, given that they were a third shareholder so the decision was not straightforward.

Councillor C. Vines picked up on the comments by the Leader with the Council being a third shareholder. He asked why was the Council picking up the tab to pay for a consultant? He pointed out that there was more faith in Council officers who were highly qualified to assess whether a company was viable or not. This was just a waste of public money to bring in additional consultants in. Abbey School was an example where consultants got it wrong.

The Leader pointed out that Abbey School was now open. The Commissioners would be responsible for making a decision and decide on the viability of Magna.

Councillor Middleton asked for clarification on the procedure for asking questions as it appeared to be entering into a debate.

The Mayor explained that for openness and transparency, he had used his discretion to be equal to all sides of the Chamber and he was allowing further questions.

Councillor Currie referred to the recent scrutiny review of Standing Orders and believed it right and proper for the Mayor to use his discretion for open debate. There was to be a further review of Standing Orders in due course.

The Mayor referred to the time guillotine which had been lifted.

Councillor Turner referred to previous protocols for asking questions and how the time period had been reduced, but he asked in terms of the responsibility for Finance which Elected Member agreed the contract with RBT and after nine years suddenly bring it to an end when three years remained? He believed Members had been told lies. This contract had cost the Council a considerable amount of money and he had asked questions about this contact in this Chamber because BT was a large company who would not accept cessation of contracts mid-clause.

The Mayor confirmed Councillor Turner had received answers to his questions in the past.

Councillor Sangster, Chair of the Audit Committee, was of the view that the discretion by the Mayor to asking questions could lead to time wasting and acting up to the webcasting taking place. However, as far as the RBT contract was concerned this did not cost the Council lots of money. In fact it had saved the Council money and came to a logical end and the contract was ceased in agreement with B.T.

Councillor Parker referred to a recent Cabinet meeting where it had been stated by Finance that the Council had a bill for £6.4 million for the Digital Region contract being cancelled. This was current and Members had been misled to indicate no further funds were required to be paid.

(8) Councillor Cowles asked would the Leader finally develop and provide an effective communications strategy for keeping both Elected Members and the public informed of the progress with Child Sexual Exploitation investigations as this would solve many problems? Councillor Cowles could not understand why this had not been put into place already.

The Leader confirmed that this was a recommendation following the two day Scrutiny Review into Child Sexual exploitation undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and would be taken forward.

Councillor Cowles also made reference to "investigations". Clearly where this referred to criminal investigations, any communications activity would need to be led by South Yorkshire Police and every effort would be made to work closely with them and provide any help and support required.

In a supplementary comment Councillor Cowles referred to his remarks at Riverside House, at the meeting at Manvers with the Police and also at the meetings of the Scrutiny Review where he stressed the importance of keeping people informed as this stopped rumours and hares running and was surprised to learn the Police had not realised the importance. There were lots of opportunities available for sharing information, but suggested there be a dedicated Communications Manager to be responsible for sharing information to ensure these matters were not lost. Elected Members were constantly being asked questions which would be alleviated if progress on an effective strategy of information sharing was implemented.

(9) Councillor Hunter asked how many places of worship were there in Rotherham by broad based religion (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, etc.) and what level of Council Tax did they pay?

The Leader explained that Places of Worship were usually non-domestic properties and were not rateable and, therefore, not included on the rating

list compiled by the Valuation Office. The Council were unaware of the current numbers of these in Rotherham.

In a supplementary question Councillor Hunter asked how many Places of Worship were there by broad based religion?

The Leader explained that the Places of Worship were not included on the rating list and so, therefore, no numbers were available. This could only be achieved by individual properties being counted.

Councillor Reynolds asked for confirmation that Places of Worship did not pay Council Tax.

The Leader reiterated that where a properties was classified as a non-domestic then they did not pay Council Tax.

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There were none.