

COUNCIL MEETING
27th February, 2019

Present:- The Mayor of Rotherham (Councillor Alan Buckley) (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Albiston, Allcock, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Bird, Brookes, Carter, Clark, Cooksey, Cowles, Cusworth, B. Cutts, D. Cutts, Elliot, M. Elliott, R. Elliott, Ellis, Hague, Hoddinott, Ireland, Jarvis, Jepson, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Mallinder, Marles, Marriott, Napper, Pitchley, Price, Read, Reeder, Roche, Rushforth, Russell, Sansome, Senior, Sheppard, Short, Simpson, Steele, Taylor, John Turner, Tweed, Vjestica, Walsh, Watson, Williams, Whysall, Wyatt and Yasseen.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

146. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor was delighted to welcome Jamie Noble from the Rotherham United Community Sports Trust, which was widely regarded as one of the top performing community organisations in the county delivering the National Citizen programmes aimed at 15-18 year olds to engage them in life long volunteering and community social action projects.

The Mayor had also learnt the Club had again been recognised as the Regional Community Club of the Year for 2019 beating big clubs.

Rotherham United Community Sports Trust continued to shine on a local and national level and as recognition for the support they have given the community for the past ten years the Mayor was humbled to receive the Community Plaque from the Trust as a symbol to the strong partnership with the Council. In recognition of the excellent partnership working, the Mayor was also privileged to be presenting Jamie with a Rotherham plaque and asked the Council to join him in congratulating all those involved.

He invited Jamie Noble to come forward and join him in the exchange of plaques.

The Mayor was also pleased to present his activity since the last Council meeting which was attached for information to the Mayor's letter.

147. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fenwick-Green and Julie Turner.

148. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications received.

149. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 23rd January, 2019, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

150. PETITIONS

There were no petitions received.

151. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

152. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(1) Mr. D. Smith asked when was it decided that United Caps could build a factory on land in Dinnington?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed a planning application for United Caps was submitted on the 17th October, 2018, but this had not yet been decided. The application would be considered by the Planning Board in due course.

In a supplementary question Mr. Smith referred to a press release from Monday, 23rd July, 2018 and a photograph outside Riverside House showing Councillor Lelliott, Councillor Watson, the Chief Executive and the Project Officer for United Caps with a statement that United Caps had announced it would be constructing a new manufacturing plant in Dinnington. A statement by the Leader of the Council confirmed the Council was excited to have a company of the quality of United Caps joining in the community and looked forward to working with them to ensure a timely completion of the new factory as well as their future expansion.

Councillor Lelliott referred to a planning application being submitted in October when a Plant Manager had already been appointed and machines were being transferred to the Dinnington plant. Reading this article the public could be led to believe there was an attempt to unduly influence the Planning Board.

The planning application was forwarded to Dinnington Town Council in November. Mr. Smith was not against the factory being built if the company were allegedly going to employ local people, but what he was against was the Leader, Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Member's bias on the July statement when it was decided that this factory would be built in Dinnington.

Councillor Lelliott pointed out that as Chair of the Parish Council Mr. Smith would be fully aware of the Local Plan and the designated sites for development in industrial areas. That particular site had always been in the Local Plan as an industrial site. The planning application was submitted in October, 2018 and was referred onto the Parish Council in November. Due process would be followed and the Cabinet Member gave her assurance that there had never been nor would there be any influence by the Planning Department to the Planning Board to make any decision. It was a statutory requirement to follow the law.

(2) Mr. P. Thirlwall asked could the Leader, following his question to the Leader at the October Council meeting, tell him what progress had been made to ensure that Elected Members complied with the law and properly completed their register of interests?

The Leader confirmed that both he and the Leader of the Opposition had reminded group members about their responsibilities under the law and he understood that virtually all Members have reviewed and updated their registers of interest. Many were accurate to start with, but have been reviewed. He pointed out that it was the responsibility of each individual Member to ensure their register was updated.

In a supplementary question Mr. Thirlwall confirmed that despite Councillor Read's efforts as Leader there were still six UKIP Members who had not completed their register of interests. He referred to both Councillor John Turner and Dave Cutts, both on the Planning Board, who had not listed their properties that they owned. This brought into question the decisions made at Planning Board because no one could tell whether in fact it could have been influenced by the properties that were not listed.

Councillors Short and Simpson, both on the Standards and Ethics Committee, one had not listed his UKIP membership and the other had not filled in a declaration of interest form at all which was a criminal offence. Also Councillor Brian Cutts had not listed the property that he owned and Councillor Marriott again had not bothered to complete a declaration of interest.

To not complete the register of interests within twenty-eight days of being elected was a criminal offence and carried a £5,000 fine and potentially being barred from standing for office.

In addition, the Council had paid Councillor Cowles £8,000 a year for being Leader of the Opposition, but up to a few weeks ago had only three members of UKIP. The rest had technically been the biggest opposition party as Independents. He, therefore, asked did the Leader believe that he, and the Monitoring Officer, were complicit in knowingly allowing six UKIP Members to commit a criminal act.

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The Leader confirmed he did not believe that he and the Monitoring Officer were complicit in knowingly allowing six UKIP Members to commit a criminal act.

(3) Mr. S. Ball explained that despite several calls to adopt the IHRA the Leader had dismissed them and asked was he following in the Labour Leader's footsteps?

The Leader confirmed he was only aware of one request from a resident for the Council to adopt the IHRA, which was the one Mr. Ball himself had sent him back in November. The Leader also confirmed he had the exchange of e-mails in front of him that had taken place at the time. His answer to Mr. Ball was exactly the same which was to say that if there was some suggestion that there were issues where members of the Jewish Community felt the Council had not acted properly and that any allegations of antisemitism were not being treated seriously, or if there was any evidence that adopting that definition would help the Council and would ensure that the rights of Jewish people, who lived in Rotherham, were well respected and well regarded, then the Leader would be very happy to have the debate.

At the moment there was no evidence, other than the one request from Mr. Ball himself. If the evidence could be presented or if people were willing to come forward, even anonymously, and provide information or views that suggested that the Council needed to adopt to ensure it was functioning properly, then the Leader would take this very seriously. Until then without the evidence the Leader was not prepared to play politics.

In a supplementary question Mr. Ball pointed out that this was not about politics, but about protecting people. As a guideline it did not cost anything to follow, but shared information to advise what was anti-Semitic and what was not. He expected the Council to sign up and this take on board so it knew what it was and was in no way political.

He assumed the Council would know what this was all about when he submitted his question. However, he received an email from a member of staff seeking clarification and he questioned why someone should be asking as all the information had been forwarded about what anti-Semitic was.

The Leader pointed out that on occasions it was quite appropriate for staff to seek clarity from a member of the public about exactly what they were asking. Again he referred Mr. Ball to his first answer which was that if there were evidence that this Council had not given due regard to any issues in relation of anti-Semitism or any issues which affected Jewish people who lived in the borough, then he would take this very seriously. He had not seen this yet and it was, therefore, not necessary to take forward this definition.

(4) Mr. M. Eyre asked, given this Council's troubled relationship with the Chuckle Brothers, including regarding Barry's support for a free school and previously forcing them to cease filming and leave the Town Hall steps, was the "Chuckle Square" decision, which had been labelled "unbelievable" and "a PR own goal" in any way, personal?

Councillor Steele confirmed it was a different Council to one in 1996 when the request to leave the Town Hall steps was made.

In terms of the free school the decision was made by the Secretary of State for the Conservative Party.

Looking at the evidence regarding the petition by the Advertiser it claimed it was in the best interests of Rotherham and it was fully supported. The 681 valid signatures that signed the petition amounted to 0.26% from a population of 260,786.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board was an independent Committee made up of cross party Members. The unanimous decision was made following advice. It would be for the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment to consider and decide upon following recommendations from the Board.

In a supplementary question Mr. Eyre referred to the support for the petition to honour one of the town's most loved local celebrities and bring some pride back to the town centre, which supposedly this Council was all about. He was shocked at the decision and whilst it was claimed not to be personal he asked the question because this was what other people had been saying. There was reference to Maltby, but there appeared to be a lack of understanding about where the brothers were allegedly from and whether the Councillors in making the decision looked at an early episode of Chuckle Vision for their misconception.

He, therefore, asked if the Council had any plans to review the decision; after all the Labour Party made a lot of news about second votes.

Councillor Steele, again pointed out that only 0.26% of Rotherham's population had signed the petition. As the Chair he was only one member of the Board, but would not change his mind. He was unable to comment on behalf of the Board's other Members. A clear recommendation had been made and this was now in the hands of the Council.

(5) Mr. L. Harron in asking his question referred to Rotherham's values and being accountable about doing the right thing not just the easiest thing, responding in a timely manner and seeing things through with pace. He referred to a constructive meeting on the 30th November, 2018, when he requested written guidelines about the petition scheme's silence about switching off the webcast after the initial Overview and Scrutiny Management Board discussion when a petitioner had requested a review

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of the response to a petition. He asked why did it take 75 days to get an initial response?

Councillor Steele confirmed he had agreed to a meeting on the 30th November where several issues were discussed. A commitment was made to provide feedback, but this was following further clarification from relevant officers. He apologised for the delay, but had not committed to a timescale in the meeting. However, a full response was provided on 13th February, 2019. Councillor Steele would have preferred if Mr. Harron had raised his concern about the delay earlier. He confirmed he was more than willing to meet with Mr. Harron to discuss matters further.

In a supplementary question Mr. Harron thanked Councillor Steele for his apology, but had emailed the Head of Democratic Services on the 10th December and also forwarded the e-mail to the Assistant Chief Executive. In it he wrote his understanding about the steps being taken about the response – one; that guidelines would be drawn up, which he had received and which provided written clarity. Secondly, which he had put in writing on the 10th December was the Chair's views and why the webcast should be switched off. He found Councillor's Steele's response interesting as it claimed he would follow due process while he remained in the role as Chair.

Mr. Harron agreed and disagreed with some of the views of Councillor Steele in the meeting, but with regards to the decision about the switching off of the webcast after the discussion, it seemed as though this was the decision for the Chair and if this seat was vacated and another Chair took the role then they may make a different decision. This seemed wrong because it was about correct procedure and process and he, therefore, asked if this could be reconsidered to ensure this was not a decision that lay with an individual Chair, but that some mechanism was found for stating that this was the position of the Council.

Councillor Steele believed it was not appropriate to discuss in public issues that may have an impact and that due process should follow through the Council. The Board considered it appropriate that both Cabinet Members and officers should leave the room during deliberations and full recommendations suggested.

Councillor Steele had responded and fed back to Mr. Harron following the meeting on the 30th November, 2018. However, unless the Constitutional Working Party altered its position with regards to petitions the practice about discussing a petition in private would continue.

(6) Mrs. M. Harris wished to focus on the dismal, dirty state of Wellgate; a major historic thoroughfare, which the Council had made few attempts to improve. Litter, filth, food, glass, dirty nappies like “Slumdog Millionaire”. She asked, why this was the case when two concrete litter bins were scrapped with no replacements. This was a HUGE problem in and around Wellgate and the roads that it served.

Councillor Allen thanked Mrs. Harris for her question and once received immediately when to look at the area for herself and every day since.

Councillor Allen had consulted with the service about what action was taken in Wellgate as she was sorry to hear that residents have observed litter and waste problems, especially as the Council did prioritise this area. Wellgate was cleaned every day from the town centre to the multi-storey car park, with the remainder of the street being cleansed on a weekly basis. This level of service was well above that delivered to the majority of the Borough.

On Monday Councillor Allen observed Streetpride litter-picking and a guy from the vegan restaurant was also out sweeping his frontage. However, it was obvious residents were observing different as they lived in the area.

Council enforcement staff also undertook regular patrols, and since the enhanced enforcement arrangement began in September 2018, twenty fines have been issued for littering on Wellgate.

In terms of the concrete bins these were in the process of being replaced or removed. There were eleven litter bins on that stretch of Wellgate. However, given the issues raised, Councillor Allen asked Mrs. Harris if she could meet her on site and walk around the area to identify together to look at what needed to be done.

Mrs. Harris commented that she was happy to meet Councillor Allen and suggested a walk along Warwick Street which she had walked down about three hours ago. It was something like Slumdog Millionaire.

The Council had tidied up the lovely Minster gardens and had employed a private firm to fine people. The area was much improved, but if people could see the cigarette ends, litter around the ancillary areas, dog excrement, cans and takeaway food litter. It was disgusting.

Mrs. Harris was not complaining about the inefficiency of Streetpride, although their role was limited, it was more about the actions of the residents of Rotherham. She suggested the Council take a more stringent policy of fining outside the town centre.

153. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, that should the Mayor deem if necessary the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that any items involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

154. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader reported on the Independent Review which had taken place in early February giving the Council an opportunity to demonstrate its continued improvement and to showcase the progress it was continuing to make since the Commissioners had left. The review went really well with the view of the Review Team being that excellent progress had and continued to be made by the Council.

The Leader wished to thank everyone for their continued support in turning the Council around.

In addition, an update on the progress of projects being led by the City Region highlighted:-

An independent bus review chaired by Clive Betts, which would examine all aspects of Sheffield City Region's bus services with recommendations expected to address declining patronage, congestion and air quality.

- The Council had secured £663,000 from the Sheffield City Region's housing fund as part of a £2.6m "Modern Methods of Construction" pilot. The scheme would deliver twelve bungalows and ten single person pods on five sites.
- The Council were awaiting the outcome of a bid to "Tranche 1" of the Transforming Cities Fund which, if successful, would fund cycle infrastructure improvements between the Town Centre and Greasbrough totalling £1m.
- The Secretary of State had written to Yorkshire Leaders and Mayor Jarvis in response to the One Yorkshire devolution proposal saying that the proposals did not meet the Government's criteria for devolution, largely due to the geography being "far greater than any of today's functional economic city regions". However, the Government were prepared to open discussions around a different localist approach to devolution in Yorkshire.

The letter did stress the importance of "honouring commitments to the people of Sheffield City Region through the implementation of the Sheffield City Region devolution deal which still remains a priority".

Finally, in partnership with other South Yorkshire Authorities and Sheffield Hallam University, as part of the South Yorkshire Futures work, the Council had secured funding from the South Yorkshire Early Outcomes Bid, securing a proportion of the overall funding pot of £6.5m.

The ambition of the fund was to increase the number of local authorities starting a transformation journey to improve, and to build knowledge of how to improve, the collective operation of local services in securing good early language outcomes for children.

Councillor Carter asked about the bus consultation and the review over the next twelve months and sought the Leader's stance on having London-style bus contract for South Yorkshire that could lead to an ever more unified and joined up service.

The Leader believed legally a Transport for London type regulation could not be introduced. As part of the bus deregulation there was only one part of the country that was exempted.

As part of the devolution deal the Leader would continue to support proposals around bus franchising, but nowhere in the country had this yet been taken that forward. This did warrant some closer attention. It was not certain whether this would necessarily resolve some of the challenges being faced, but certainly some form of better co-ordination and better decision making to ensure that services covered the places where people needed them would be a welcome outcome.

155. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st January, 4th and 18th February, 2019, be received.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

156. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2019-20 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Further to Minute No. 109 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th February, 2019 consideration was given to the report which proposed the Council's Budget and Council Tax for 2019/20. This was based on the outcome of the Council's Final Local Government Finance Settlement, budget consultation and the consideration of Directorate budget proposals through the Council's formal Budget and Scrutiny process (Overview and Scrutiny Management Board) alongside a review of the financial planning assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Council remained committed to protecting the most vulnerable children and adults, but despite the positive direction of travel for the Council, the challenges were still significant in the following areas:-

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- Children's social care continued to overspend over and above the significant additional resources that have been provided for the service in recent years.
- More children than anticipated required care and protection by the local authority.
- Implications for support services as the increase in looked after children numbers had led to additional legal costs.
- Adult Care budgets continued to be under pressure due to demographic pressures.

In setting the proposed 2019/20 budget, approval was sought for an increase of 2.99% in the Council's basic Council Tax.

The Leader wanted to place on record his thanks to the people whose hard work enabled him to present this budget today; his Cabinet colleagues who have worked hard and selflessly again to deliver the best possible proposals, staff, especially in Finance, and of course Councillor Alam.

He explained this was the fifth budget he had presented with the grim gruelling tide of Tory austerity reaching a little higher and a little further. Each year the steps taken hold off the worst effects from those least able to afford it.

A decade of austerity that meant, by the end of the next two years, the Council would have been forced to find cuts and savings amounting to more than £200 million from its budget. That was nearly £800 for every man, woman and child who lived in the borough.

Only this week five of the biggest children's charities in the country joined forces to slam what they called the "devastating and dangerous" funding cuts to Children's Services across the country.

The Leader described how when he became Leader of this Council four years ago, there were a little over 400 children in care. Last year that number hit 660. Whilst that number had since fallen and steps were being taken to ensure that more vulnerable children were able to stay in a family setting, with the right support, the primary obligation was to children.

In setting the budget plans for the next two years, the Council were committing a total of £17 million more than was planned to ensure that the needs of children in the Council's care were met.

In 2014/15, the net revenue budget for the Children's Services directorate was £42.9 million. Next year it would be £65.4 million.

The Leader confirmed that the number of agency social workers in Children's Services was now well below national average. Changes to Early Help Services were already well underway and the new pathway would ensure that children dealt with fewer professionals, with fewer hand offs and improving their experience. This would reduce costs over time, but it would be done in the right way, in a way that was sustainable.

In terms of Adult Social Care, the plans would continue to be followed set out, maximising personal independence, working more closely with partners in the National Health Service and building more specialist housing.

In initial proposals, reductions were put forward to reduce the funding for the contracts currently held by Healthwatch and Rotherham Sight and Sound, which together would have totalled nearly £90,000 next year.

Strong representations were received during the consultation, including from service users, expressing concern about this reduction and the impact this would have.

Those concerns were listened to £55,000 would continue to be provided which should allay some of the fears of those service users.

For Environment and Community Safety at every stage it had been strained to save the money without reducing the services that residents relied upon.

In Customer Services four out of every five people who signed up for the new garden waste service did so online – with three times as many people registering in the first wave. It was, therefore, odd that in order to request a bulky waste collection from the Council this could only be achieved by speaking to someone on the telephone.

Frontline street cleaning staff performed a great job, in all weathers, and often in very difficult circumstances. Why could their jobs not be made simpler by allowing them to see the actual pictures of problems that people reported.

The Council's website was outdated and too often people who used services were forced to repeat the same information to different services and departments. It was frustrating for them and inefficient. Information technology was, therefore, to be upgraded and it was expected to launch a new Council website in the autumn, making it easier for residents to use the services they wanted to and, therefore, reducing the cost of running them.

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In Neighbourhoods people's expectations of their Councillors have changed. Good Councillors have always been part of their communities, engaged in local issues, hearing local concerns and advocating local solutions. This was why £30,000 was removed from the Members' budget when the move was made to the new Neighbourhoods model.

As a result, Wath Councillors were providing investment to improve Montgomery Hall. Rother Vale Ward Councillors were helping to secure a regular Afternoon IT session at Treeton Community Centre and Sitwell and Boston Castle Members were tackling crime and nuisance on the Duke of Norfolk Estate. In each area the issues may be different, but the need to work alongside communities was the same.

Approval of the budget and financial strategy assumed the carry forward into 2019/20 of any remaining funds from the Community Leadership Fund and delegated Ward Budgets. This was in line with the agreed principle of the allocation of these funds for Neighbourhood Working that the funds were spent according to the priorities of Ward Members.

Building on the principle of locality working, proposals would be brought forward in the next few weeks to bring together the HRA funding currently allocated through the Area Housing Panels and provide challenge to work more closely with housing tenants to spend that money wisely to resolve local issues. This proposal would mean additional resources in the hands of Ward Councillors in every Ward to help deliver the Ward plans set out.

Councillor allowances would continue to be frozen in cash terms, keeping the Council's spend on Councillors below the level it was over a decade ago.

From the work within Neighbourhoods speeding traffic was a growing concern, so an additional £450,000 was being allocated from capital investment over the coming three years to address local concerns about speed limits and road safety.

South Yorkshire Police would be joining in this work and allocating additional resources available for speeding enforcement.

With the need to save money in Streetpride the service would be remodelled so that it was more focussed on providing the right services in each Ward and locality. Teams in Enforcement and Regulatory Services would also be integrated building on the work that had already been done to co-locate staff with the Police in Rawmarsh, Maltby and at Riverside.

Only a few months ago the Council heard about the frustration of the family who have seen anti-social behaviour and vandalism to their memorial in Clifton Park. The provision of the CCTV would be funded and the Council would look to see where else in the borough cameras may need to be deployed.

In addition to the CCTV, the Sight and Sound and Healthwatch funding and road safety, free parking would also be provided in the town centre every Saturday through the year. The Council had listened to the public and subsequently responded.

However, sometimes matters were made difficult and unpopular and the financial crisis facing Local Government only made that situation worse.

The public understood this and as part of the budget consultation, 63% of the people who expressed a view said that in light of the £30 million funding gap being faced, they would be willing to pay at least 3% more Council Tax in order to protect services.

Last year the Leader believed the whole future of Local Government hung in the balance and despite the patching up from Central Government it still did. Within the next year, the Government must decide how Councils were going to be funded in the long term.

In the last week, the Institute for Fiscal Studies showed how their plan to remove deprivation from the funding formula moved even more funding away from areas like Rotherham to wealthier parts of the country. For Rotherham this could mean as much as a further 10% reduction in the assessed need per resident.

This was not right as it would hurt those least able to afford it and betrayed the consciences of those who were proposing it.

Last year Northamptonshire had just issued their Section 114 notice when they had run out of money. To those that asked why difficult decisions were being made each year, the Council knew what would happen if those decisions were not taken.

Northamptonshire's Children's Services were now in their second period of Government intervention. Hundreds of children were reportedly having to wait for months for social work assessments and Ofsted were reporting that staff felt "overwhelmed" and "drowning", with caseloads in some cases as high as fifty. Rotherham knew how this felt

In contrast with the changes made in Rotherham Ofsted now regarded the services for the most vulnerable children as "transformed". Significant improvements have been made in the response to child sexual exploitation with services for care leavers reported as "outstanding".

With Rotherham's history the Council must not be complacent. It's the public that lost out the most when responsibilities were backed away from. Always those who needed the system to work the most and always those whose voices were heard the least.

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On behalf of all those people the Council was doing all that it could to give certainty to residents, service users and staff and this budget was the plan.

In seconding the budget Councillor Alam confirmed this was a responsible budget for public services that directly impacted on day-to-day lives of people. The Council had undergone a major improvement journey since May, 2015 and the Corporate Improvement Plan fully implemented. Services have been transformed and the commitments made today would mean the Council was once again focusing on putting residents first, despite the Government underfunding social care.

This was a budget truly fit for purpose and the Council remained committed to protecting the most vulnerable children and adults and delivering value for money. The budget prioritised how Council, in partnership with residents, could promote Rotherham. Despite being faced with cuts to Rotherham's Government grant the Council had to find £30 million over the next two years. Today the Council was presenting a balanced budget which was realistic.

Councillor Alam wished to thank the Leader of the Council for chairing endless working budget meetings, the very inclusive approach, Cabinet Members for their participation and one Council approach, members of the working group, officers of the Council including the Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and the Strategic Director and her team who have worked tirelessly to get the Council to this position and Scrutiny Members.

The national picture was grim. Austerity was not over. The Government was elected with a promise to reduce the national debt, but this had failed and was damaging those people who were most in need. The promise was for more cuts to come. There was no hiding place from the fact that the most vulnerable and poorest members of the community were paying the highest price for this failure.

There were those who were suffering, were in most need with the cuts causing extensive inequality in society where more people were attending food banks and facing poverty.

The £30 million of savings required over next few years were in addition to that that had already be made resulting in a reduced budget. These were unfair cuts by the Tory Government and a direct discrimination against a Council with high demand needs so it left few options and some difficult decisions on savings. In doing so frontline services to most vulnerable in communities would be protected and efficiencies sought through the transformation of services which would save the Council resources in the longer term.

The savings presented today were a challenge to the Council. The Council must show it was prepared to think differently, use more accessible IT, put technology at the forefront of change to expand services online and be more inclusive.

Savings in resources would be made in the longer term but would also provide user friendly services. Rotherham's residents should not have to suffer mercy of this uncaring Central Government. This budget was a continuation to protect Rotherham's most vulnerable children and adults.

Councillor Jepson referred to Page 109 of the document pack relating to the Capital Programme General Fund and its projections to 2023. It did not appear to reflect the boundary changes in 2020, which in turn would affect the budget amounts if the Ward changes were not applied and the allowances were not taken into account.

Councillor John Turner sought special consideration for the Rotherham Sea Cadets who had been in existence for seventy years and he described how support was limited compared to other armed force recruits.

Councillor Hoddinott endorsed the view put forward by the Leader and Councillor Alam and the emphasis of this Council becoming more responsive to residents' concerns whilst protecting the most vulnerable.

In terms of her own portfolio area, Councillor Hoddinott described how waste collection and roads made up less than 20% of the Council's budget. This Government were lowering taxes, but not investing in vital services. The proposals today meant there would be changes as the Council would not be able to do everything it did before.

The Council could not protect the services so in order to save money recycling was improved. 3,967 people were now receiving the new all year round green waste service and it was opportune to the staff and the residents who were making the changes in the bin system. Plastic was now being recycled with some items more than other Councils.

The state of the roads was a common complaint and although the Government had given an extra £1.65 million this year for roads it was far from the investment that was needed. This was why locally £10 million had been put into the 2020 roads programme with next year seeing £3 million invested equating to three roads being resurfaced every week. Not only were people seeing their roads improved, but the number of potholes was being reduced since 2016. This was also the final year of upgrading the street lights to make them more energy efficient and they were paying for themselves with energy bills down by 40%.

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Councillor Hoddinott was proud of what this Labour Council was delivering and from the apprenticeship scheme five apprentices would join the Council in permanent jobs this year. In addition, eight highway apprenticeships would join next year.

The Council was hearing the concerns about road safety and last year voted for an increased budget for road crossings which meant the crossing on Bawtry Road would be installed this year. Councillor Carter voted against this investment last year, but was getting a second chance and his residents may be interested to see whether he voted against the proposals again as the Council invested a further £450,000 into road safety concerns. Ten new school would see a 20 miles per hour scheme put in place alongside the extra enforcement from South Yorkshire Police to catch those reckless on the roads. South Yorkshire Police were also commended for also listening to the Council and its residents' concerns and putting more resources into tackling off road motorbikes.

This Labour Council also decided to protect funding for domestic abuse services. Indeed in the last year the amount had been increased with bringing in external funding for this important work and 350 victims and survivors had been helped in the last year. Whilst 2,000 women were being turned away a year from refuges due to the cuts, Rotherham was one of the few places in the country that had retained this facility.

Councillor Hoddinott was proud that once again the Council was proposing to not cut domestic abuse services and the protection of the most vulnerable residents was being secured.

Councillor Cusworth spoke in favour of the proposals and in her position as Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission she had followed the journey very closely in the improvement of Rotherham's children's services and whilst difficult decisions had been taken children's lives were much improved.

This Council could not change universal credit or stop the roll out, but as others had already reported the impact of the austerity policies on the most vulnerable people was huge. It was emphasised this was a political choice not an economic necessity. It was difficult being a Councillor and not everyone could take those decisions, but Councillor Cusworth was really pleased to see the further investment in children's services as a sound pathway to safely reduce numbers of children coming into care, allowing children to return home or to move to permanent placements.

Councillor B. Cutts congratulated the Leader for his eloquent political comments, but sought clarification on the increasing number of children coming into care and whether this was a failure on the Council's part that this was happening when the Council was reducing the number of homes and care centres.

Councillor Roche considered it only right that the most vulnerable in society should receive protected services. It was a difficult year and in some cases the savings were because of changes in the service forced by the austerity on the Council and many other Northern Councils by the current and previous Governments.

This Council was facing a number of very significant challenges with an ageing population, a growing and increasing population with long-term care needs. On top of this there were also cost pressures with the National Living Wage.

The service had inherited some historical high cost care packages resulting in an overspend in adult social care. However, as previously promised the overspend had been reduced and was on track to reduce further. This would be improved with a more personalised community-based approach.

The continuing outstanding work in developing integration was as a result of a partnership between the Council the CCG, the hospital trust and other partners such as the Police and Voluntary Action Rotherham. Rotherham recognised as a leader in development integration in those services with the emphasis on allowing people to live as long as possible in their own homes

Councillor Roche echoed the Leader's thoughts about Sight and Sound and the magnificent work taking place and he was delighted the funding could continue along with additional funding for HealthWatch.

He described his own involvement in a small panel looking at grants from the Sheffield City Region to help improve mental health for men within the borough.

The Council was committed to providing the best service within a balanced budget within a decreasing grant from National Government and acknowledged the difficult decisions that had to be made.

He expressed his concern about health inequalities in Rotherham where the life expectancy was two years below the national average and even more so amongst the deprived Wards.

Councillor Roche particularly wanted to thank all the officers for their hard work and dedication as part of the difficult decisions that had to be made, but at same time improving services. He was happy to recommend this budget.

Councillor Walsh explained that any changes to the budget would always impact on the welfare of the people in the borough. He commended the Budget Working Group for their work in minimising the harm of British Government policies and for giving careful consideration to the budget

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now presented.

Councillor Carter was unable to support today's budget. He described the many years of this Labour controlled Council and how they failed to make a real difference with an ever increasing debt being piled on the residents of Rotherham by Labour. The Council was failing by not maximising opportunities to increase the money from National Government and could have received money for building more homes. He believed over £30 million in funding had not been accessed through the City Region, but instead those Councillors chose to bicker amongst themselves and had let communities here in Rotherham down.

Councillor Carter claimed this administration had been found lacking in many areas, but when safeguarding the most vulnerable people in society chose to close adult day care centres where, in some cases, there was a five year backlog for vulnerable people with learning disabilities causing great uncertainty for those people, their families and the staff who worked with them.

Initially funding was proposed to be withdrawn from Rotherham's deaf and blind communities before an outcry forced them to change their mind.

He described how in a four year period in South Yorkshire 139 homeless people were convicted of being homeless under the Vagrancy Act. This did a disservice to these people rather than supporting them.

The Labour Leader of this Council promoted in the media the fact that the Council paid its staff the Joseph Rowntree Living Wage, but failed to mention the Council did not insist that hard-working care home staff and other sub-contractors who looked after vulnerable older people were not. This was something that this Labour Council could insist on in its minimum standards charter, but had chosen not to.

Councillor Carter believed this Labour leadership would much rather stand up and say the Advanced Manufacturing Park was doing well, which was correct, but they failed to say this project was heavily backed by Liberal Democrats when in Government contributing to its success.

Councillor Carter remained concerned that those most vulnerable went without a voice in Rotherham. Children achieving above the national average at Foundation stage was welcome, but by Year 6 were let down which was not acceptable and falling well below the national average trend towards A Level.

Councillor Carter went onto describe the factions and arguments in the media between the national Labour politicians and how this Council needed to bring forward proposals to make sure that all staff indirectly working for the Council received the Joseph Rowntree Living Wage, needed to write a presumption against fracking, properly fund services for

disabled people so they were not just seen as an optional extra, become a national leader in helping people have a good quality of life and give people the opportunity to succeed. On this basis he was unable to support the budget.

Councillor Lelliott responded to Councillor Carter's comments, particularly in relation to the Advanced Manufacturing Park, the education of Rotherham's young people and how the Budget Working Group, in relation to economic development, had teased out its core capital and capitalised on investments. Rotherham had a strong R.i.D.O. team that would deliver the Town Centre Masterplan and, therefore, commended the best budget for Rotherham.

Councillor Steele described the process for scrutiny of the budget and how the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board discussed proposals line by line, challenged officers and made recommendations. He was pleased to see the inclusion of funding for Sight and Sound and Healthwatch, the full review of Democratic Services and how the Opposition Party were fully in support of what had been put forward.

He referred to the Liberal Democrat and Conservative Parties becoming a coalition Government and agreed with Councillor Cusworth's comment that austerity was a choice. It was this Council's choice to provide top quality public services and work together to deliver the best possible services for Rotherham. He overwhelmingly supported the budget

Councillor Watson referred to the investments in Children's Services, which were making a difference. Numbers were increasing, but this did not mean the Council had failed. Austerity affected families and the introduction of Universal Credit was actually exacerbating situations, which was why the Council were having to assist more children.

Comments were made about the City Region and education which was good in the Borough and enhanced by the new University Campus allowing more local people to go to university and to seek jobs in the borough. Despite the promises the Liberal Democrats had increased tuition fees.

Councillor Watson also referred to neighbourhood working and how this was making a massive difference in local areas. Ward Members have been able to use relatively small funds to make a real difference in their Wards. On this basis he commended the budget proposals today.

Councillor Napper endorsed Councillor Steele's comments about the intensity of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board looking at each budget proposal line by line. He could not see how Councillor Carter could comment when he failed to sit on any committee. He echoed his support for the budget.

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Councillor Reeder was in support of the budget, but found the precept for the Police and the Fire Authority at 14% totally unacceptable.

Councillor Cowles referred to proposals to scrap student fees until it came to reality and then the proposals merely became aspirations. No one was really happy about the Government's actions, but everyone must understand and appreciate where the deficit came from which the Labour Party were not entirely blameless running up a deficit between 2003 and 2008. He described his own political views and how he was in favour of a high wage economy where people contributed and paid tax.

Councillor Allen referred to the report which identified the priorities for this budget and focused on the positives rather than the negatives. This budget looked to protect Rotherham's green spaces and improve the quality of the public realm ensuring streets were clean and safe. The report also listed the contribution that services would be making towards savings over the next couple of years.

In terms of capital investments there was to be work around the procurement of mechanical sweepers, new litter bins and very importantly a new caravan park at Rother Valley. From her experience as a Cabinet Member and having served for more than thirty years as a Local Government Officer there have always been calls to savings on local authorities, but gradually over the passage of time that situation had got worse. The pressures now on Local Authorities had increased and it was more onerous to achieve those requirements and those responsible for the cuts needed to hang their heads in shame.

However, from her own viewpoint Councillor Allen praised the efforts in this budget, which were far-reaching and very sensitive in its production, and was happy to commend the report today.

Councillor Cooksey wished to correct Councillor Cowles' comments on the issue of tuition fees and how Labour stood by its pledge to abolish them, but believed he was confused in that it was the Liberal Democrats who abandoned the policy. The Labour Leader had commented he would look at student debt.

Councillor Cowles commended the incredible achievement to get to this stage for the budget, but referred back to comments about low paid workers and the taxation system from a Government who had little regard for multinational corporations who used the U.K. as a base, but failed to contribute to the economy.

However, he confirmed he would be voting for the budget and suggested that in future there be two separate votes for the budget and council tax.

He further added that in terms of reserves and the good work taking place in Wards, which had proved to be well received and popular, he proposed

to move a relatively small sum of money intended for increased baseline reserves and divert this to Ward Councillors and their Ward budgets to £10,000 and thus using £210,000 in total for further improvement on the environment for local residents. He also asked that this vote be recorded.

Councillor Cowles also sought agreement for a similar project for cross party scrutiny, in conjunction with Improving Places Select Commission, to consider looking at leaves, especially when other projects consider the use of Christmas trees to assist with river bank erosion or oil extraction from leaves or pine needles. This may be extended to look at grass cuttings as well.

Mover: Councillor Read

Secunder:- Councillor Alam

Councillor Cowles moved an amendment to Rotherham's Budget for 2019/20 was put forward to the reserves strategy and the capital programme and this was seconded by Councillor M. Elliott:-

That the Budget and Council Tax 2019/20 report be accepted as proposed, with the exception of an amendment to the reserves strategy and the capital programme. The amendment proposes to utilise £210k of reserves in 2019/20 to allocate an additional £10k per Ward to the Neighbourhood Working capital programme budgets for 2019/20.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 19 Councillor Cowles' request for a recorded vote was supported by five or more other Members.

Councillor Jepson was in full support of the amendment, but looking again on the budget figures it would appear only four out of the twenty-one Wards had actually spent all their Ward allowance, which meant money was being carried forward. He wondered if consideration had been given to the changes to the Ward boundaries and how these funds must be spent. He fully supported the thriving neighbourhoods agenda, but urged all Members to spend their Ward budget wisely.

The Leader welcomed the support for the thriving neighbourhoods agenda as it demonstrated that it was worthwhile and received enthusiastically.

However, to consider introducing new spending commitments funded totally from reserves when work had been done on the budget process would be foolish and not a good idea at this stage. However, he was not against the principle of increasing the amount of money that Ward Councillors were responsible for as it was an excellent way of responding to the needs of residents. This was why work was taking place with the former Housing Panels so moving to a more devolved Ward budget was a move in the right direction.

Decisions were set to get more difficult and services had to be funded. Using money from reserves was not free money and it did not last forever.

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Once it was gone it was not recoverable. On this basis he was unable to support the amendment, but was happy to continue working towards decisions about what was the right level of money for Ward Councillors to use in their areas.

Councillor Watson welcomed any opportunity to make a long term difference and actually improve the lives of the vulnerable. However, in this case he was not convinced that this was the right time. Councillor Jepson referred to monies not being spent and being carried forward into another year, but the report was simply a snapshot in time and the position had since changed.

It was not the right time to consider taking money from reserves and the cross party Neighbourhood's Working Group, that Councillor R. Elliott was a member, could consider how to take the potential to increase Ward budgets forward. He extended an invitation to Members to make suggestions.

A further report would come forward about funding proposals when the Ward boundaries and in some cases Ward Councillor numbers altered.

Councillor Walsh welcomed any opportunity for further Ward funding, but the Council had to be realistic where this came from and the public perception leading up to the 2020 election. This must be planned for appropriately. On this basis he was not in favour of the amendment, but was totally supportive of the thriving neighbourhoods agenda and wished to see it flourish.

Councillor Wyatt was also unable to support the amendment. There was no end to austerity in sight so it made financial sense to keep a sustainable level of reserves, but to look at methods of how neighbourhood working could be developed in the future.

Councillor John Turner was in support of the amendment and did not believe such small funds would be damaging and allow for a sustainable level of reserves to remain, which he was in favour of retaining.

Councillor Carter supported the principle of further devolution, but was unable to support the amendment for the reasons he outlined previously. However, he wished to record his support for greater focus on devolving power down to the lowest level possible.

Councillor Cusworth was unable to support the amendment and was in favour of retaining a sustainable level of reserves. The future remained unclear, but to take funds from one area to give to another area at this stage was not supportable.

Councillor Steele could have supported the amendment had this been brought at the appropriate time during the budget discussions. It could not be supported to propose this today.

In terms of the request for a cross party scrutiny review to look at the issue of leaves this would be considered.

In a right of reply Councillor Cowles referred to the baseline reserves and their protection which was not statutory or mandatory to maintain and could see no reason why they should be increased.

To propose a further funding boost devolved to Ward Members was in no way an attempt to boost election figures. It was interesting that this year a two year budget was being proposed so that any problems encountered this year could simply be rolled over into next.

The vote was put for the amendment and LOST.

(Councillor Cowles, B. Cutts, D. Cutts, M. Elliott, R. Elliott, Hague, Jepson, Marriott, Napper, Reeder, Simpson and John Turner voted in favour of the amendment)

(Councillors Alam, Albiston, Allcock, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Bird, Brookes, The Mayor (Councillor Buckley), Carter, Clark, Cooksey, Cusworth, J. Elliot, Ellis, Hoddinott, Ireland, Jarvis, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, Mallinder, Marles, McNeely, Pitchley, Read, Roche, Rushforth, Russell, Sansome, Senior, Sheppard, Steele, Taylor, Tweed, Vjestica, Walsh, Watson, Whysall, Williams, Wyatt and Yasseen voted against the amendment)

In a right of reply to the original motion the Leader responded to the comments by Members. To Councillor Jepson he confirmed Councillor Watson was already looking at proposals for neighbourhood working in readiness for the election in 2020. To Councillor John Turner he confirmed there was no money available to support the Sea Cadets, but he was happy to discuss the subject further.

He confirmed Councillor Cusworth spoke movingly about the impacts of decisions on some the most vulnerable members of the community and to Councillor Reeder that discussions today were only on Council's budget. The Fire Authority and Police precepts were set separately.

Quite right some Members raised points about tax equality and this situation could worsen. Councillor Carter, however, could not see the value of Labour Councillors, but had listened to comments about survivors of domestic violence, the services now in place now and the evolution of services for survivors of child sexual exploitation, which were making a huge difference in people's lives.

Reference had also been made about debt, but Treasury Management was saving around £5 million a year revenue to help protect services. Councillor Roche spoke about extra funding to prevent suicides, which was one of the top causes of death. Reflecting back to the publication of

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the Jay Report steps were being taken to make a real difference in people's lives and Councillor Carter's flippant comments were not justified. Councillor Carter was doing democracy a disservice as he spoke about scrutiny being labelled yet failed to engage in discussions and in the support to the budget.

Resolved:- (1) That the Budget and Financial Strategy for 2019/20 and 2020/21 as set out in the report and appendices, including the £23.536m of savings as set out in Appendix 1 and a basic Council Tax increase of 2.99% be approved.

(2) That the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) be approved.

(3) That the proposed use of reserves, as set out in Section 2.7 noting that the final determination will be approved as part of reporting the financial outturn for 2018/19, be approved.

(4) That the comments and advice of the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer), 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 (Section 2.12) be noted and accepted.

(5) That the consultation feedback from the public, partners and trade unions following publication of Directorate budget savings proposals on the Council's website for public comment from Friday, 26th October, 2018 to 30th November, 2018 (Section 4) be noted.

(6) That the Council Fees and Charges schedules for 2019/20 attached as Appendix 6 be approved.

(7) That the proposed increases in Adult Social Care provider contracts as set out in Section 2.5 be approved.

(8) That the Business Rates Retail Discount for 2019/20 in line with Government guidance be applied.

(9) That the Business Rates Rural Relief Scheme for 2019/20 in line with Government guidance continue to be applied.

(10) That the annual determination of the Council Tax Base be delegated to the Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, be approved.

(11) That the use of in-year Capital Receipts up to 2021/22 to maximise capitalisation opportunities arising from service reconfiguration to deliver efficiencies and improved outcomes for clients and residents, and thereby minimise the impact of costs on the revenue budget as included in the Flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2019/20 (Appendix 4) be approved.

(12) That the proposed Capital Strategy and Capital Programme as presented in Section 2.10 and Appendices 2A to 2E be approved.

(13) That the approved Capital Programme budget be managed in line with the following key principles:-

- (i) Any underspends on the existing approved Capital Programme in respect of 2018/19 be rolled forward into future years, subject to an individual review of each carry forward to be set out within the Financial Outturn 2018/19 report to Cabinet.
- (ii) In line with Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules 6.17 and 13.9, any successful grant applications in respect of capital projects will be added to the Council's approved Capital Programme on an ongoing basis.
- (iii) Capitalisation opportunities and capital receipts flexibilities will be maximised, with capital receipts earmarked to minimise revenue costs.
- (iv) Approval of the Treasury Management Matters for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix 3 of this report including the Prudential Indicators, the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Investment Strategy.

(Councillors Alam, Albiston, Allcock, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Bird, Brookes, The Mayor (Councillor Buckley), Clark, Cooksey, Cowles, Cusworth, B. Cutts, D. Cutts, J. Elliot, M. Elliott, R. Elliott, Ellis, Hague, Hoddinott, Ireland, Jarvis, Jepson, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, Mallinder, Marles, Marriott, McNeely, Napper, Pitchley, Read, Reeder, Roche, Rushforth, Russell, Sansome, Senior, Sheppard, Short, Simpson, Steele, Taylor, John Turner, Tweed, Vjestica, Walsh, Watson, Whysall, Williams, Wyatt and Yasseen voted in favour of the proposals)

(Councillor Carter voted against the proposals)

157. RECOMMENDATION OF THE CABINET - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20

Further to Minute No. 92 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st January, 2019 consideration was given the report which provided a detailed technical overview of the current position and the reason for changes to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) recorded all expenditure and income relating to the provision of Council housing and related services, and the Council was required to produce a HRA Business Plan setting out its investment priorities over a thirty year period.

Engagement work with tenants was ongoing and the Council had received national funding bodies support to the Housing Growth Programme. Funding had also been received to support the prevention of, and support to, victims and survivors of domestic abuse, rough sleepers and the Council would work towards supporting the most vulnerable of people.

Following the introduction in 2012 of HRA self-financing, whereby the Council was awarded control over its HRA in return for taking on a proportion of national housing debt, Rotherham's HRA was in a strong position with a healthy level of reserves. A number of policies were introduced by Central Government that resulted in a reduction to HRA resources, namely:-

- 1% per annum reduction in Council rents over four years. 2019-20 is the final year of this policy.
- Reinvigoration of the Right to Buy (RTB) (reduction of qualifying period to three years): Reducing stock
- Welfare reform - bedroom tax, universal credit and benefits cap: Impacting on tenants' ability to pay their rent, and increasing the resources required by the Council to collect rent from tenants in receipt of benefits.

At the time this resulted in the need for significant savings to be made over the life of the business plan.

The key shift in policies and legislation had resulted in changes to underlying assumptions were:-

- Agreed rent formula of CPI + 1% from 2020-21 onward for five years.
- Removal of the HRA Debt Cap.
- Removal of pay to stay which would have meant any household earning over £31,000 would have been required to pay at or near market rent.
- Removing the proposed restriction of Housing Benefit to Local Housing Allowance rate for new tenants from April 2019.

- Removal of the proposed enforced sale of higher value Council Properties.
- Removing the planned restriction of Universal Credit Housing costs to the majority of 18-21 year olds.

Whilst there have been a number of welcomed policy changes, there were still multiple policies which would continue to impact directly or indirectly on the amount of resources available with the HRA Business Plan. These were:-

- Roll out of full service Universal Credit to all remaining working age tenants in Rotherham since July 2018 onwards.
- Ongoing Right to Buy eligibility.

The combined effect of these changes was likely to have a significant impact on the nature of housing provision in Rotherham, not just in terms of Council Housing.

The Council would continue to invest in the future of its Council housing services in Rotherham and £51 million had already been agreed to deliver new housing across Rotherham. A further £54 million was earmarked for future housing to invest in the future and to try and replace as many of those homes lost through the Right to Buy each year.

Tenants would also receive a welcome 1% rent reduction in 2019/20 whilst at the same time the feeling the pressures from the welfare reform measures and the roll-out of Universal Credit.

Councillor Reeder sought clarification on how high value properties could return £2 million each year if they had not been sold.

In response the Cabinet Member explained about the Government decision and formulae relating to high value properties which mean here in Rotherham there was payment for the privilege of keeping those high value properties amounting to around £2 million a year or until they were sold.

With the amount of people desperately waiting for Council housing those properties were kept. That decision had since been quashed.

Resolved:- (1) That the proposed 2019-20 Base Case Option 2 for the HRA Business Plan be approved.

(2) That the Plan be reviewed annually to provide an updated financial position.

Mover:- Councillor Beck

Seconder:- Councillor Alam

158. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007 - ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Consideration was given to the report which set out details for the election of the Leader of the Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

In accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, under the system of governance used by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, it was a requirement to elect the Leader of the Council for a four year term of office. The present Leader of the Council, Councillor Chris Read, was elected to this position on 4th March, 2015.

As the current term of office of the Leader of the Council was due to expire on 4th March, 2019, it was necessary to vote to ensure that the office of Leader was filled.

After the move to whole Council elections, it was recommended that the Constitution be amended to reflect the need to appoint a Leader for a four year term of office from the date of the first "Business" Annual Meeting after an election. This would ensure that the term of office was coterminous with the electoral cycle.

Resolved:- (1) That Councillor Chris Read, as Leader of the Majority Group, be elected as Leader of the Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act.

(2) That Article 7.3 of the Constitution be amended to read:-

The Leader will be a councillor elected to the position of Leader by the Council at its annual meeting for a term of four years, to be coterminous with the electoral cycle of whole Council elections.

He or she will hold office until:

- *he or she resigns from the office; or*
- *he or she is no longer a councillor; or*
- *he or she is removed from office by resolution of the Council, whereupon his or her term of office as Leader shall end on the day of that Council meeting.*

Mover:- Councillor Keenan

Seconder:- Councillor Walsh

159. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2019/20 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how the Council amended the Procedure Rules in the Constitution in September, 2017 to require the Calendar of Meetings to be presented for approval at the Budget Council meeting. This report was, therefore, submitted in accordance with that requirement.

Resolved:- That the Calendar of Meetings for the 2019/20 municipal year be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

160. ATTENDANCE DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 85 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Consideration of this item was no longer required.

The Mayor was supported in welcoming Councillor Pitchley to the meeting and that her recovery would continue.

161. APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR-ELECT AND DEPUTY MAYOR-ELECT

Consideration was given to the report which invited Council to appoint a Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect, who would then be nominated for election as Mayor and appointment as Deputy Mayor at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 17th May, 2019.

It was also proposed that the Constitution Working Group be tasked with developing a protocol to codify the process for the appointment of a Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect in future years.

Councillor Napper moved and Councillor Reeder seconded the nomination for Councillor John Turner to be elected as Deputy Mayor Elect.

Councillor Read moved and Councillor Watson seconded the nomination for Councillor Ian Jones to be elected as Deputy Mayor Elect.

Councillor Read Moved and Councillor Watson seconded the nomination for Councillor Jennifer Andrews to be elected as Mayor Elect.

Resolved:- (1) That, after receiving nominations from the political groups of the Council, Councillors Andrews and Jones (respectively) be nominated Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect for the 2019-20 municipal year.

(2) That the Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect be nominated for election as Mayor and appointment as Deputy Mayor at the Annual

Meeting on 17th May, 2019.

(3) That the Constitution Working Group develop and recommend to Council a protocol to codify the process for appointing the Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect for ensuing municipal years.

Mover:- Councillor Read

Seconder:- Councillor Watson

162. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY UPDATE

Councillor Steele, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, provided an update on the latest work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the Select Commissions - Health, Improving Lives and Improving Places over the last few months.

An update was provided on the work undertaken by Scrutiny during the last few months and good progress was being made with the planned programme looking specifically at the budget, the Town Centre Masterplan and overspends in Children's and Adults Services.

In addition, Council at its last meeting considered a scrutiny review looking at modern methods of construction and it was hoped this policy would be adopted moving forward.

Health Select had focused on the Integrated Care Pharmacy and implementation of programmes integrating health and social care.

Improving Lives continued with its work on the Ofsted recommendations and the improvements to services like domestic abuse.

Improving Places were continuing to monitor the externalised contract with Dignity and to do further work for the benefit of the people of Rotherham.

Cabinet Members were able to bring forward projects for scrutiny to consider and Councillor Roche had requested some consideration to the care tendering process and particular recommendations were made. This would be evaluated after twelve months to ensure it was fit for purpose.

Scrutiny in Rotherham was making a difference and the Chair thanked all those involved in the process.

In seconding the report Councillor Cowles endorsed much of what the Chair had proposed. Scrutiny was an important function, but not always properly understood or appreciated and worked effectively on a cross-party basis.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

Mover:- Councillor Steele

Seconder:- Councillor Cowles

163. THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS - UPDATES FROM WARD COUNCILLORS

Further to Minute No. 55 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th November, 2018, consideration was given to the annual Ward Updates for Holderness, Dinnington and Hellaby as part of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy.

The Strategy signalled a new way of working for the Council both for Members and for staff and covered every Ward in the borough delivered through Ward Plans developed with residents to address local issues and opportunities. Ward Members would be supported by the neighbourhood team and would work with officers and residents from a range of organisations to respond to residents.

Councillors M. Elliott and Taylor, on behalf of the Holderness Ward, gave an update on their ward priorities.

Councillor Elliott described the use of the devolved budget for worthwhile causes, the discussions with residents when formulating Ward Plans and the issues identified as a priority.

He further reported that Holderness Ward itself had around twenty-three groups and organisations undertaking fantastic work so wherever possible assistance was provided with raising funds through use of the Community Leadership Fund.

The Ward also supported, through the Start a Heart Project, the location of a defibrillator. In addition, the relocation of a community group to Heighton View Community Centre was supported through a variety of consultations and awareness raising sessions.

Additionally, there have been number of skip days at different venues around the Ward with the aim of avoiding residents' temptation to fly tip, engagement in the Love Where You Live initiative with residents and the local Scout Group and the installation of covert cameras deployed in known local hotspot areas.

These cameras have been used to gather information for offences linked to fly tipping and had resulted in the seizure of four vehicles and prosecution for the offenders.

A number of road safety initiatives have also been supported outside schools and public buildings. Aston Springwood School have also been asked to submit designs for signs to be erected to promote playgrounds around the Ward. The standard of entries was overwhelming.

Speeding traffic remained an issue in the Ward and liaison had taken place with the community to join together to use a handheld speed

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camera, to undertake a survey with Highways and Councillors were in the process of purchasing a mobile speed activation sign to support the concerns on Nickerwood Drive.

Swallownest Bowling Club offered to support an initiative to allow groups of school children to experience crown green bowling, which would be taken forward.

Numerous estate roads were also in need of attention and through the utilisation of the multi-hog machine it was hoped the areas suggested would be repaired.

A number of community safety initiatives have also been supported for vulnerable persons including window, shed and scooter alarms, which were being distributed and based on a person's need. In addition, a community engagement initiative where local craftsmen would undertake small immediate repairs was promoted.

Councillor Taylor thanked his Ward colleague and commended how easy it had been to work together in developing ideas and solutions and wished to formally thank the Neighbourhood Working Team for all their hard work and support.

During the initial stages of the Ward Plan, various methods of communication and consultation were considered and as many groups as possible were visited to discuss and share ideas, taking into account individual residents' concerns raised at surgeries. It was emphasised this was a community plan to make the area better. Whilst around sixteen groups were visited initially, this had since risen to twenty and more visits were scheduled throughout the year to ensure the ideas were free-flowing, that they became more inclusive and diverse and the conversations taking place influenced ideas during the formulation of this year's Work Plan.

Councillors Mallinder, Walsh and Vjestica, on behalf of the Dinnington Ward, gave an update on their Ward Action Plan.

Councillor Mallinder formally thanked everyone involved in the Neighbourhood Strategy. This had been a collaborative process with partners in Neighbourhoods and the community who came together in one meeting to put forward ideas for the Ward Plan.

After several years of collaborative working Ward Members managed to turn what was an overgrown and unused piece of land into allotments, which would not only address issues of flytipping, but promote health loneliness and isolation. This showed community working with Neighbourhoods at its finest.

Work had also taken place with Laughton Junior School to place Billy and Belinda bollards outside the school. A competition was held for the design and the winner received book tokens and certificates from Ward Councillors.

Following receipt of a petition local residents were supported with a flashing speed camera sign on Lords Road.

In December a partnership community event was held for residents to receive advice and equipment to keep safe in their homes and neighbourhoods. This also provided an opportunity for residents to discuss with their Ward Councillors any issues of concern.

Ward Councillors put the community at the heart of everything and would continue into the future. Cabinet Members were also thanked for their support.

Councillor Tweed reported on the Ward budget spend through the Community Leadership Fund and how the first large project involved repairs and lighting to a multi-use games area so it could be used during the winter and dark evenings. This was now a well-used facility and provided outreach team activity.

There was a huge push to engage as many residents in the diverse Ward of Dinnington as much as possible and for all areas to benefit from the devolved budget in some way. With this promotion more and more applications for support were being received. The Ward Councillors worked collaboratively together and often merged funds from their Community Leadership Fund for the benefit of residents for certain projects.

Councillor Vjestica had great pleasure in reporting how inclusive and efficient the mechanism for neighbourhood working had been and thanked Cabinet Members for their work and support.

This had enabled the Ward to deliver on both local and Council priorities such as loneliness and supporting young people with environmental projects in schools. In the future it was planned to support training, provide play equipment, fund craft sessions for children during school holidays and also support cleaner communities.

Ward Colleagues were actively involved in the community clean-ups, promoted the events of the Salvation Army who provided advice and support on a range of issues and had recognised community heritage providing a memorial bench for coal miners and their families.

Information was regularly provided on information boards throughout the Ward of activities available from sewing groups to craft clubs. The contributions through neighbourhood working would hopefully enrich the

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lives of residents of all ages and the communities in which they lived. Particular thanks were made to the Neighbourhood staff for their dedicated and enthusiastic work.

Councillors Andrews, B. Cutts and John Turner, on behalf of the Hellaby Ward, referred to their Ward priorities.

Councillor Andrews welcomed the neighbourhood working approach and the opportunity to deliver projects in the community. Ward Members particularly supported a project to update Lyme Tree Park at Maltby following the concerns of residents about its condition. New play equipment was jointly funded by the Council and Area Housing Panel and the whole area had now been transformed into a safe play area for local children.

A number of walkabouts have been carried out to identify what was important to local people and businesses and how they could be supported.

To help raise awareness about suicide prevention signs were placed around the Ward, posters distributed to businesses and local clubs, including doctors' surgeries.

Councillor Andrews welcomed the support from her Ward Colleagues and from the neighbourhood staff who supported the area. More ideas had been received for the following year and the funds would be allocated accordingly. She was so pleased with what had been achieved and how the priorities had been met.

Councillor B. Cutts highlighted how social isolation and the safety of residents had been addressed through a modern concept of solar light which funded eight solar lights along a footpath that connected residents from an estate to local shops. This had been of great benefit to that particular community and had been very successful.

Councillor John Turner echoed the sentiments about the less satisfactory Area Assembly mechanism and the positivity around neighbourhood working on a cross party basis across the Ward.

Regular meetings had been held with the Police about crime, funding was provided for speed awareness cameras, regular liaison with schools involving some litter picking with them across the borough and speed reduction initiatives at St. Alban's School were only part of the good work taking place.

The value of the walkabouts, finding out what was important to local people, had been invaluable and information had been provided where possible advertising Councillor surgeries where residents could visit to share other concerns along with mechanisms of support that were in the area.

The Ward had a number of priorities that were being explored and work was already taking place with initiating double yellow lines for a Dementia Group, the Wickersley young people's music society had been supported and for Bramley Parish Council support had been given to the decoration of the youth club and village hall.

The Ward Councillors would continue to explore opportunities to improve road safety, provide resources to keep neighbourhoods clean, provide grants to various groups and had purchased burglar, shed and fire alarms to assist local residents in made their homes more secure.

Resolved:- That the Ward updates be received and the contents noted.

Mover:- Councillor Watson

Secunder:- Councillor Read

164. AUDIT COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendation and minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Wyatt

Secunder:- Councillor Walsh

165. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendation and minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Roche

Secunder:- Councillor Mallinder

166. PLANNING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendation and minutes of the meetings of the Planning Board be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Sheppard

Secunder:- Councillor Williams

167. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Staffing Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Secunder:- Councillor Read

168. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE STAFFING COMMITTEE - PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2019/20

Further to Minute No. 11 of the Staffing Committee held on 30th January 2019 consideration was given to the report which detailed how under the Localism Act 2011, Chapter 8 Pay Accountability, authorities were legally

required to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement by the 31st March each year. This needed to include and detail the remuneration of its Chief Officers and must then comply with the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year in making any determination.

The format and content of this Pay Policy was in line with previous practice and in accordance with guidance previously issued by the regional Local Government Employers Association. It was, therefore, felt to reflect good practice and it had not been considered appropriate to deviate from this.

Resolved:- That the Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20 be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Seconder:- Councillor Read

169. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE STAFFING COMMITTEE - ADOPTION OF REMUNERATION PACKAGE FOR THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Further to Minute No. 13 of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 18th February, 2019, consideration was given to a report which detailed the open and rigorous recruitment process to fill the vacant post of Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment.

The report also set out the recommended level of remuneration detailed in the Authority's Pay Policy Statement for the post of Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment as earning £100,000 or more and, therefore, recommended this to Council for approval.

Resolved:- That, in accordance with the Pay Policy Statement 2018-19 and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the remuneration package of £117,976 for the post of Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment be approved.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Seconder:- Councillor Read

170. LICENSING BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendation and minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Board Sub-Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Ellis

Seconder:- Councillor Beaumont

171. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

(1) Councillor Napper referred to the Police and Crime Commissioner increasing the precept to Police by 14% and asked why?

Councillor Sansome pointed firstly the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel was a scrutiny board and secondly it was for the Police and Crime Commissioner to answer questions on his budgets. He, however, made the following points. The budget assumed the Force could make £4.0m of savings and used £2.6 million of reserves. If the Police and Crime Commissioner did this he could increase the number of police officers by 55 (40 would go into neighbourhoods).

This would be the first time since 2010 that the overall number of police officers in South Yorkshire would have gone up.

At the same time South Yorkshire Police continued to face exceptional other cost pressures including Hillsborough and CSE which were expected to cost in the region of £7 million in the coming year.

The South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel thoroughly scrutinised the budget proposals and did understand the need to increase the precept.

In a supplementary question Councillor Napper asked was part of the precept used to fund the false arrest of the residents in the tree protests and who were compensated out of court.

Councillor Sansome confirmed this was a question for the Commissioner and the Police, but gave a commitment he would seek to find an answer.

(2) Councillor Cowles explained Councillor Sansome had previously agreed with him that the 101 call system, despite being a straight forward application, remains unfit for purpose. Therefore, he asked could Councillor Sansome say why he had agreed to the uplift in the precept when he believe he stated he would oppose the increase?

Councillor Sansome explained having reminded himself of the response he gave at the Council meeting on 23rd January and clarified he had agreed that the 101 system was unfit for purpose. What he had said was that he shared Councillor Cowles' frustrations around the difficulties the public were experiencing with the 101 system. He had also assured fellow Councillors that the Police and Crime Panel had regular updates on 101, both at full Panel meetings and other meetings with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel with the Commissioner and it was an issue the Panel was collectively concerned about, and would continue to monitor.

On the second point in respect of the uplift in the precept, he had not said he would oppose the increase, but both he and Councillor Short said it had to be right for the people of Rotherham.

The Panel held a Budget Workshop on 29th January, 2019 prior to the formal meeting on the 4th February, 2019. The proposals were looked at in great detail, and many questions asked. The Panel considered its options carefully and, whilst the increase in the precept was agreed, it

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was with a strong recommendation that the Commissioner discussed an increase in police officers and/or PCSOs over and above the forty that were proposed for neighbourhood policing across South Yorkshire.

The Panel did not agree the increase lightly, and if anyone wished to watch the webcast of the Panel from 4th February, 2019, the statement Councillor Sansome read out voiced strong concerns about the need to increase the number of neighbourhood police officers put forward which was supported by Councillor Short. This debate would continue with the Commissioner and Chief Constable as to how this progressed.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles referred to last year the Police and Crime Commissioner being given the option to increase charges by £12.00 a year for homes in council tax Band D, with corresponding increases for other bands. This year doubling to £24.00.

In a recent interview Dr. Billings said early indications suggested South Yorkshire residents were struggling to keep pace with rising costs in a poor area, but were willing to pay more provided they could see the benefits.

Councillor Cowles wished the benefits could be seen as he had been asking for the 101 system and it had been promised for at least two years. He, had, therefore, asked for Councillor Sansome to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to the Council to explain their actions and so therefore, asked when they were coming.

Councillor Sansome commented on the benefits of South Yorkshire Police and it was worth noting that when Chief Constable Crompton was in charge neighbourhood policing ended. Since Chief Constable Watson was in the position he was policing had moved back into neighbourhoods which was why he was pleased that a number of the UKIP councillors were pleased with the way community safety was progressing because of neighbourhood policing.

This was the stance the Police and Crime Panel had with the Chief Constable on the need for more neighbourhood policing.

On the other benefits concerning 101 yes the Commissioner and Chief Constable had been invited. He was sure the Cabinet Member would be willing to give a response. He was not particular on who was invited to the Chamber, but was keen to know the answers.

(3) Question 3 was withdrawn.

(4) Councillor Cowles asked what was the cost to the tax payer of the failed 101 system to-date?

Councillor Sansome provided some background information and pointed out from the actual precept only 7% of the properties in South Yorkshire were in Band D. More properties 75% were in Bands A and B which would have a weekly increase of 31p and 36p respectively.

In terms of 101 South Yorkshire Police had had old IT systems for many years. They kept breaking down and needed replacing.

Two new systems were being developed for South Yorkshire and Humberside Police. The total capital costs were £3.5m for South Yorkshire and this had been covered in the capital programme. The Police and Crime Commissioner received capital grants from the Government towards this.

All 101 systems across the country were facing unprecedented increases in calls and this was putting all systems under strain. In at least one force area the 101 system was recently completely discontinued for a while because the call handlers were overwhelmed.

The Police and Crime Commissioner accepted that as well as a new system, the volume of calls must be reduced, especially the high numbers of non-crime and non-police calls. He was looking to local Councillors to help educate the public about the appropriate use of 101.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles confirmed he was quite happy to pay the extra money when a system that worked was received.

He explained Dr. Billings also sat on the South Yorkshire Fire Authority and he chaired a collaboration board between that service and the Police to promote joint working. This could also include abolishing the Fire Authority made up from Councillors from the four districts and take over the service. According to him this would cut out duplication and save money by sharing services. He also said he was delaying this activity. Of course in other areas the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner was carried out by the Regional Mayor and that would save a further salary.

Councillor Cowles, therefore, asked could Councillor Sansome ask him why he was not getting on with this to the benefit of taxpayers.

Councillor Sansome pointed out that in terms of the Fire Authority and Police and Crime Panel it was worth noting that the Fire Authority did not hold or scrutinise the work. It was a separate body within the Fire Authority, so if there was the will to take away one body then consideration would need to be given as to who would hold that person and officers to account.

Councillor Sansome raised the profile of the Police and Crime Panel which held the Police and Crime Commissioner to account. He had raised issues previously about the former Member on the Police and

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Crime Panel and the questions that had been asked and their relevance. However, he cared for the people of Rotherham and would continue to challenge the Commissioner with questions which were relevant.

(5) Councillor Carter asked did the South Yorkshire Pensions Authority invest in companies who have arms deals in countries such as Saudi Arabia, and if so what percentage of the pensions fund was this?

Councillor Ellis provided some background about South Yorkshire Pension Authority's first and legal duty was to provide pensions 50,000 members who have paid in and to be in a position to meet the liabilities.

This question was probably prompted following the Guardian publishing an article where it named five companies that were dealing in Saudi Arabia and it did mention that South Yorkshire Pensions Authority had ownership of some shares.

South Yorkshire Pensions Authority on 31st December, 2018 had approximately £29 million out of an £8 billion asset representing 0.36% value of the fund. The majority of that was in Airbus; whose primary manufacturing was in civil aircraft which showed the difficulty of actually separating this out.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter was sure residents and pension holders would be shocked to know that that was happening. He asked what percentage in total investment in those companies have been made over the past ten years and what plans were there to make representations to the Pensions Authority of potentially divesting from these companies.

Councillor Ellis explained it was quite difficult to say actually what percentage of the £29 million was with companies who were actually trading with Saudi Arabia.

There were companies in this country who were producing arms for forces and who came under scrutiny from Government and subject to regulations about what they were able to sell and to whom. It was suggested that there was a need to lobby the Government to be a bit quicker in how they were judged who to sell to and Councillor Ellis confirmed she would be happy to join with Councillor Carter if he wanted to lobby by writing to Government in that regard.

(6) Councillor R. Elliott asked having reviewed the answer received from Councillor Atkin at last Full Council with regard to staffing and the response of Rotherham's second pump at night, he was concerned that the information given appeared to go against the previous information Councillor Atkin had given to Full Council and asked that he clarify his understanding?

Councillor Atkin explained Rotherham's second fire engine was available all of the time in the day and on an 'on call' basis at night, on occasions when the first fire engine was committed to an incident.

Originally, the service had intended to recruit 'on-call' firefighters to staff Rotherham's second fire engine at night. Instead, it made sense to use existing 'on-call' firefighters from Birley Moor fire station to provide this cover.

Birley also had a full time fire engine.

In a supplementary question Councillor Elliott had, as a result of Councillor Atkin's response at the last Council meeting, made inquiries himself and the information provided was factually incorrect. There were no retained staff at Rotherham. If the first pump was called out the retained staff at Birley or Dearne provided cover. Rather most specifically the pump was not staffed at night. The staff which Councillor Atkin referred to were located at Birley or Dearne and they responded to an alerter where they had five minutes to get to their stations and then they drove at normal road speed to Rotherham.

The average time for the other pump to arrive at Rotherham was forty minutes and as they were not called out until Rotherham One had been out for fifteen minutes. This meant Rotherham was not covered for the best part of one hour so he asked did Councillor Atkin agree this was an accurate picture of the situation.

Councillor Atkin confirmed he had already responded to this.

(7) **Councillor R. Elliott** explained it was deeply concerning that as an RMBC representative and Vice Chair of the FRA Councillor Atkin did not appear to have a grip on the matter at hand. The first requirement of a Council and an emergency service was to ensure the safety of residents and staff and he asked him if he agreed.

Councillor Atkin believed he had a grip on the matter and agreed the safety of residents and staff was paramount and the personal comments made against him were unwarranted. Both these statements he believed would be verified when the service was inspected in June this year.

In a supplementary question Councillor Elliott pointed out that as a result of the actions of the Fire Authority much of the routine work of the firefighters was not being done. In particular fire prevention checks and the installation of smoke alarms were outstanding. Additionally key performance figures were going in the wrong direction increasing instead of decreasing.

A motion was raised to full reinstate the second pump in Rotherham when finances allowed which everyone in this Chamber supported. The Fire

Authority were sat on £25 million of reserves - still no second pump. Furthermore he had asked for this to be brought back to scrutiny which Councillor Atkin refused saying there was no point as there was nothing further to discuss; yet two weeks ago the Assistant Fire Chief, who incidentally lives in North Yorkshire, argued the very points given to Councillor Atkin. This was not here where he could be questioned, but in the letter pages of the Advertiser. Therefore, Councillor Elliott asked was democracy at stake here, was this Chamber irrelevant and should the Council accept what was said or passed in the Chamber because it would be ignored in the hope it would go away or if this Chamber was to be respected would Councillor Atkin please stand up for Rotherham and instruct the Fire Authority to get the second pump reinstated.

Councillor Atkin agreed a motion was passed that when finances were available the second pump would be reinstated. Circumstances had since changed. Changes were required to the close proximity stations because of the judgment.

The fitting of smoke alarms was continuing, not as frequent as previously, but continuing nonetheless. If the second pump was reinstated this would mean there would be less money for the fitting of smoke alarms.

Reference was also made to vast reserves. The Fire Authority were going to be inspected in June and the Government had taken her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in collaboration with the Fire and Rescue to start inspecting Fire Services in three tranches.

South Yorkshire was in the third tranche some time in June. A report would then be received later in the year.

The first tranche had seen fourteen services inspected and the reports were available on the relevant website. Councillor Atkin drew attention to two such reports; one for Surrey who were criticised for using reserves to prop up outdated systems of working, which was exactly what Councillor Elliott was asking for in Rotherham.

The second for Lancashire was highlighted as an exemplar of good practice where they were using modern methods of shifting and staffing the pumps and ironically they had ten CPC stations,

172. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN

(1) Councillor Carter asked what progress has been made with installing the twenty-one new CCTV cameras agreed for use by South Yorkshire Police?

Councillor Hoddinott was unsure about the reference to South Yorkshire Police, but confirmed the Council did allocate additional capital funding this year to purchase CCTV equipment for the Borough, with one camera dedicated to each ward and some had already been installed.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter asked how many of the twenty-one have already been installed in their locations.

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed four were installed and five were about to be installed. Twelve wards were yet to formally agree where they wanted to put them.

(2) Councillor B. Cutts asked what numbers of foreign nationals have registered in Rotherham last year?

The Leader confirmed he would provide this in writing to Councillor Cutts so the detail could be clearly seen, but the numbers of National Insurance registrations for foreign nationals totalled 463. The full breakdown was:-

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	TOTAL
Bulgaria		18	30	39	25	0	112
Czech Republic	31	43	61	27	21	15	198
Eritrea	5		15	16	14	6	56
Italy	12	15	18	24	29	11	109
Lithuania	40	27	38	45	51	30	231
Pakistan	56	26	47	55	39	44	267
Poland	134	106	132	97	62	42	573
Romania	9	131	206	279	190	72	887
Slovakia	131	137	76	55	52	29	480
Spain	9	16	31	30	18	10	114
Others	236	208	238	274	223	204	1,383
TOTAL	663	727	892	941	724	463	4,410

(3) Councillor Carter asked how much more did it cost to have an out of hours burial in Rotherham compared to Sheffield?

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed it was difficult to compare as Rotherham offered exclusive right of burial for one hundred years and Sheffield offered ninety years. Even with this difference Rotherham was nearly £200 cheaper.

(4) Councillor Carter asked what discussions had the Cabinet Member had with the Red Box Project and what were the outcomes regarding introducing free sanitary wear in secondary schools?

Councillor Watson confirmed this was one of the rare occasions where he and Councillor Carter were in agreement on where this should go. He explained the Red Box project was a voluntary charity that provided sanitary protection for girls in school. All schools have a small budget for girls who needed help during the day where they could be given products. The idea behind the Red Box Project was for families that were so financially challenged to be given a full week's worth of products and be

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able to go to school rather than having to choose between food and heating and sanitary protection for their daughters. The Red Box Project was a voluntary charity with no paid staff.

Councillor Watson had met with all the Secondary School Head Teachers who were keen to have this project in their schools. The second step from this was the setting up a meeting with the officer that covered the South Yorkshire area for the Red Box Project and finding a convenience slot in her diary.

Councillor Watson had previously extended an invitation to Councillor Carter to be formally part of this meeting and would advise him of the date and time of the meeting accordingly.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter welcomed the progress, but asked if consideration had been given as to what could be done in Council buildings such as libraries and Council offices with similar provision.

Councillor Watson confirmed this had not been considered, but was happy to take this forward.

(5) Councillor Cowles asked was the proposed extension of a PSPO to cover Eastwood a clear indication that both the Eastwood Deal and Selective Licensing have failed to deliver on much of their intended benefits?

Councillor Hoddinott disagreed, but pointed out this was simply an indication that every tool in the box would be used to improve the quality of life for residents in those areas.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles pointed out most reasonable people had read the last rites over the Eastwood Deal a long time ago, although Selective Licensing had had some effect on some properties it was not giving any power that the Council did not already have. It simply transferred the costs in the service to landlords and had not improved the environment the environment one iota. Whilst he applauded any initiative that that gave more power he reminded Councillor Hoddinott that previously at an Area Assembly meeting she had said it would take a couple of years to sort out the problems. Only former Councillor Dodson said you were completely wrong. He dismissed your approach starting it had all been tried before and in view of the recent statement from Mr. Goy of CLP it was suggested that it would take ten years in order to clean up Eastwood effectively.

Councillor Cowles, therefore, asked did the Cabinet Member accept that she was hopelessly wrong.

Councillor Hoddinott disagreed. These methods had not been tried before. The voluntary schemes had not worked and she found it incredible

that Councillor Cowles was saying there had been no improvements. It was right that landlords were challenged in that area and it was found that 90% of the private properties did not comply with the minimum legal standards. There have been huge improvements in the private properties in that area it was correct that landlords were responsible for the living conditions of their tenants.

Also the PSPO had not been tried before. The Council were willing to try new things in the area to improve it. There have been improvements over the last couple of years and work would continue to take place with local Councillors who were working really hard to improve the area.

(6) Councillor Cowles referred to NDRR, Non Domestic Rate Relief, the 80% mandatory relief awarded to charities occupying buildings and asked what processes, procedures and scrutiny was applied by RMBC to ensure that best use was made of both public and charity funding, or was it simply a tick box exercise on application?

Councillor Alam confirmed those charities seeking relief were required to complete an application form and where the Council was satisfied that the charity was in occupation it could not refuse to award relief because it considered that the use was insufficient or not making best use of the property.

An annual review process was carried out with a further application and appropriate checks and where the Business Rates Team were not satisfied that the charity was still entitled to the relief it would be cancelled.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles asked where buildings were unoccupied who scrutinised them, how often a check was made, what assurance was asked for with the charity to reveal its use of space, how was it determined that they met the requirements and where possible reduce the number of buildings in use to ensure the best use for both the taxpayer and charity funds.

Councillor Alam again pointed out that there was no legal obligations to check what buildings were being used for as long as the property was wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes.

(7) Councillor Mallinder asked the Cabinet Member to update her on the bin roll out and whether any positive changes to recycling have been seen yet?

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed the Waste Services was in the second phase of this implementation following the first phase before Christmas where people switched to the green bins for the paper and card collected at the kerbside. Residents and staff were thanked for working through the huge change and with the move to increased recycling rates 3,000 new

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green bins have been issued for people to recycle. The service were half way through the roll out of the pink bins and whilst still early stages the amount of general waste had been reduced by about 15%.

In a supplementary question Councillor Mallinder asked if an update could be provided at the end of the phases to see how they were progressing.

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed there was a commitment to go back Scrutiny for an evaluation. The changes were big and hoped to be fully rolled out by the end of March. There was a continuing conversation about how recycling was increased and how it was made easier for people to use.

(8) Councillor Cowles asked what was the current total of Non Domestic Rate Relief awarded in the Rotherham borough at the current time and how many buildings were occupied under such arrangements?

Councillor Alam confirmed as at 31st January, 2019 the total of all Non Domestic Rates Relief, including mandatory charity relief, awarded for the 2018/19 financial year was £15,273,163.

There were 4,991 properties which have received relief during the 2018/19 financial year.

(9) Councillor Cusworth asked could the Cabinet Member for Waste please give an update on the early impact of recent changes to waste collection?

The question had already been answered as part of Question 7, but in a supplementary question Councillor Cusworth went on to ask the Cabinet Member if she could advise her how these changes have been received by the public of Rotherham in the form of sort of compliments and to check how well the changes have been received in Swinton so this was echoed throughout the borough.

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed to Councillor Cusworth, as a vocal advocate for Swinton, that Swinton was in the middle of getting the pink bins with the final drop off being next Monday.

A drop in event was held at Swinton at the start of this change and it was generally well received. The early signs were good in that most people were managing to work their way around the system and were seeing the impact.

There were some minimal compliments and complaints coming through and normally about individual issues. The service was working really hard to resolve them. If, however, there were residents or areas that were struggling with the changes door-to-door engagement was available if anybody was struggling with the new system.

(10) Councillor Cowles asked was there any grant funding this year, if so, what was the total amount donated?

Councillor Alam explained the Council had paid out £562k in grant payments, to date, in 2018/19 allocated as follows:-

- £0.187m to Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) which provided infrastructure and support services to voluntary and community organisations in Rotherham this being part of a three-year service level agreement which commenced on 1st April, 2018 (The total annual agreement being £0.203m)
- £0.240m to Citizens Advice Bureau, this being part of a three-year service level agreement which commenced on 1st April, 2018. This being the full annual amount of the agreement.
- £1k to a local business from the Rotherham Economic Regeneration Fund.
- In addition to the grants payments referred to previously, there were a number of social fund payments made totaling £0.076m. This included payments to Fareshare – Food in Crisis, VAR and Laser Credit. In setting the budget for 2018/19, Council agreed to fund these costs from the social care fund reserve.

Furthermore, a total of £0.058m had been also been paid from the Community Leadership Fund.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles asked the Cabinet Member if he could be provided with the list so it could be scrutinised more closely, how people were aware of grants, the information circulated and how people knew they could apply.

Councillor Alam advised this was all part of the tender process and it was the Rotherham Partnership that promoted grants to community sector organisations. The list of figures would be provided in writing to Councillor Cowles.

(11) Councillor Carter asked about reports that plastic recycling was removed from proposals to change household waste collections, between working group proposals and consultation and why this was the case.

Councillor Hoddinott explained plastic recycling had always been done at Manvers and Councillor Carter was probably referring to was the kerbside of recycling plastic. Discussions did take place and as part of the decision numerous options were considered resulting in proposals that were affordable within the budget in late 2017. Following a period of public consultation the Government subsequently allowed Councils to raise the

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Council Tax which meant the service were able to respond to that really strong public feeling that they wanted recycling of kerbside plastics. So what was said in private was very much what was said in public.

(12) Councillor Cowles referred to the bus station refurbishment which had allowed a lot of the sheeting used in the process to get into the canal which looked a real mess. He, therefore, asked if it had not already been removed, could the Cabinet Member ensure the developers were alerted to this issue?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed following the report a site inspection was carried out on 22nd February, 2019 but nothing of significance was observed in the river. As the bus station refurbishment works were the responsibility of South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive both they and the developer have been alerted to the issue Councillor Cowles had raised. If there were any further problems she would ensure these were addressed.

(13) Councillor Carter asked how was the plastic waste being recycled under the new kerbside collection scheme?

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed all details were provided at the Members' Seminar. The presentation detailed various slides and a further copy would be provided to Councillor Carter if he had misplaced it.

(14) Councillor Carter asked when was the Council first aware of issues with care being provided at Rother Heights care home in Treeton and what steps did it take to address this?

Councillor Roche confirmed the service first became aware of the issues at Rother Heights following a compliance audit carried out by the Council in October 2018 as part of the ongoing effective care home monitoring service.

Since this date the Council had regularly audited the service against an agreed action and improvement plan, met on a regular basis with the senior management of the service and made it clear what the expectations were around delivering a safe and quality service. Officers have liaised regularly with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) who continued to monitor and review and there was a further review meeting between officers and CQC on the 26th February, 2019. It was worth noting that the Council did not have any placements with this service and officers were liaising regularly with the other commissioning authorities to fulfil their obligations where they did have places at the home.

There had been two seminars last year and the service record relatively speaking across Yorkshire was good, but even one home in a category that raised concerns was one too many. If Councillor Carter had attended the seminar he would know the Council's powers for private providers such as this one were extremely limited, but where there were concerns

these would be raised with the CQC and clients moved where necessary. In a supplementary question Councillor Carter was assured the Council did not have any users of that service there, but asked how long this was the case for.

Councillor Roche confirmed he would need to check this out and feedback in writing.

(15) Councillor Carter referred to a company getting in touch with him about wanting to recycle some of the waste plastic collected at the kerbside by RMBC and turn it into street furniture and asked was the Council open to this suggestion?

Councillor Hoddinott was happy to have those conversations within tendering rules if the details could be passed on.

(16) Councillor Cusworth asked could the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health tell her what the Council was doing to support residents with complex needs who may be struggling to maintain tenancies?

Councillor Roche explained that in recent years the Council's Housing Service had invested significantly in support for residents who were struggling to maintain their tenancies.

Additional staff have been employed in the Housing Income Team to offer Tenancy Support. These officers provided advice and support to vulnerable Council tenants, so that they were able to sustain their tenancy. They helped the tenant claim welfare benefits and often make referrals to other agencies such as drug and alcohol services and or to mental ill health services where appropriate.

Housing also funded a Social Worker in the Early Help team and their role was to work closely with families at risk of homelessness, irrespective of tenure.

The Council also had housing Related Support Funded Services aimed to:-

- Develop an individual's capacity to live independently or sustain their capacity to do so.
- Help to expand the tenancy choices for people. This included people in danger of becoming homeless.
- Provide immediate refuge places for victims of domestic abuse.

The Council were also funding a Housing First Scheme, with partners from South Yorkshire Housing Association and Target Housing to help people who have chaotic lives and who have failed to engage with or were the least likely to benefit from other service interventions.

Rotherham's Housing First pilot provided a home for twenty people who were homeless or sleeping rough in the Rotherham area. The scheme offered housing to people first, with no conditions around receiving support. Whilst there were no conditions for the customers receiving the accommodation the providers would always offer support, and persist with this offer even if were turned away at first.

Since April, 2018 when the pilot was launched twenty people with complex needs have been accommodated and there were fourteen on the waiting list. Early indications were that this was a highly successful scheme making a real difference to the lives of people.

(17) Councillor Walsh referred to Michael Gove announcing an intention to standardise domestic waste collection arrangements, introducing weekly food waste collections as part of the plan and asked would this work for Rotherham?

Councillor Hoddinott explained the service had been looking at the proposals that Michael Gove suggested and a lot of them did require new laws to be brought in. However, given the Government's ability at the moment to deliver Brexit consideration was being given to emergency provisions to keep waste collected in the event of a no deal as there was no guarantee from Government at the moment that Rotherham could move waste out of the borough.

There were some good ideas in what was being suggested to make producers of plastic pay for the waste was really welcome and to support consumers to buy more sustainable products. It could be of a concern to Rotherham if the proposal to standardise the bins and the waste collection arrangements and to introduce weekly food waste as this was likely to cost the Council substantially more. Of concern could then be the Government passing down the responsibility to local authorities, but not providing the funding for any changes otherwise it would be an extra cost on local taxpayers.

In a supplementary question Councillor Walsh was aware of the ludicrous consequences that segregated food waste collection would have for Rotherham's municipal neighbours over in Sheffield. They used incineration, but at the moment food waste was in the general waste stream and that quite happily was taken to the incinerator. With any changes they would have to have a segregated collection, pay extra money to do the segregated waste collection and then take it to back to the depot to mix back into the general waste in order to get it through the incinerator.

Rotherham was not in this situation, but it was likely other location authorities were going to have equally ludicrous arrangements and he asked was it not time for the Local Government Association to gang up on Mr. Gove and point out the issues.

Councillor Hoddinott acknowledged Councillor Walsh's very important point, but highlighted that Rotherham already recycled a lot of waste at Manvers. Like plastic, food waste was also extracted so would be in a similar situation where different waste was being collected. A further bin for Rotherham's residents could probably be a step too far. However, a strong message should be sent to Michael Gove by taking part in this consultation and comments fed in about what should happen.

(18) Councillor Carter asked did the Council require contracted providers such as care homes to pay their staff at least the Joseph Rowntree Living Wage?

Councillor Roche confirmed the Council did not and could not mandate that external care providers paid their staff the Joseph Rowntree Living Wage, despite Councillor Carter's earlier comments.

The Council did take steps to encourage external providers to also be good employers and was keen to look at could be done to encourage this. This included when commissioning looking to see pay rates, training, professional development and other aspects so the Council could make sure the external providers were providing the best they could for their staff.

It was worth noting that currently Rotherham paid more than the Yorkshire average to care workers.

In a supplementary question Councillor Carter understood the minimum standard charter would be used for tendering contracts and would cover this so he asked was this not correct.

Councillor Roche reiterated the Council could not mandate what an external provider was going to pay their workers.

(19) Councillor Cowles asked could the Cabinet Member give assurance that the Police were on board with the PSPO and, therefore, patrols and out of hours cover were agreed between the two services so that it was then known very easily which service would be patrolling and when.

Councillor Hoddinott confirmed the Police were on board and joint patrols were already taking place. It was important the services worked together with reduced resources and local Councillors have been out on evenings to observe some of the patrols taking place.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles pointed out that since this would take additional officer time he could not recall this initiative coming before scrutiny at the time of the budget review. He, therefore asked was there a budget for this for this activity and if not how was it anticipated it would be paid for.

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Councillor Hoddinott confirmed discussions had taken place at Scrutiny in terms of the current PSPO and also the future one which would still require a decision. Agreement had been made about going out to consultation and talking to partners, stakeholders and residents.

In terms of the PSPO, this was another tool that officers, during their normal working time, could use alongside the joint patrols with the Police in the Eastwood area. One of the advantages meant fixed penalty notices could be issued on the spot rather than having to go through much of the lengthy statutory procedures.

(20) Councillor Cusworth asked could the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health please tell her what the Council was doing to support people with physical and/or mental health conditions back into work?

Councillor Roche explained the Council's in house service AD-PRO Employment Services' aim was to enhance and harness skills and break down barriers to employment for adults with a learning or physical disability. AD-PRO provided a person centred training package for adults with disabilities who were preparing to move on to employment. The Council were intending, as reported, extending the work of AD-PRO across the whole of Rotherham.

The total number of people who were accessing the various different types of employment support activity through this service was fifty-eight broken down as:-

- Ten people were accessing voluntary opportunities (organisations include St Vincent's, Salvation Army, RSPB, Barnardo's).
- Nineteen people were accessing work experience (organisations include RMBC, BA components, Costa, Poundland, Riverside Café, Mears, Lifewise).
- Twenty-three people were accessing paid work (organisations/employers include dog walking, Premier Inn, Asda, RMBC, Partec, McDonalds, Broad Horizons).
- Six people were paid by BA components.

In addition to the above the Council was also engaged in two initiatives first the Sheffield City Region's "Working Win" health-led research. This innovative research trial, one of only two such projects in the UK, had also been credited in the NHS' Long-Term Plan, launched earlier this month.

Working Win aimed to find out whether a new type of support for people who were struggling with work due to health issues, was better than other services which were already on offer.

Funded by the NHS and the Government's Work and Health Unit, the trial – which covered South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw - was one of two research projects that had the potential to change the way that services were delivered nationally.

So far 3,000 people have already registered as volunteers for this support programme, it was aiming to have a further 4,000 people registered across the project area. This project was very successful.

The second was the Finishers and Interiors Sector BuildBack Programme which helped job seekers who were serious about developing a career in drylining. The programme put them through two weeks' college training in the skills and competencies required for installing drylining, followed by a two-week work placement on-site with a local employer.

The Council was pleased to be chosen for those two projects.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cusworth asked on the "Working Win" initiative how long was it set to run for in Rotherham and was it hoped this could be extended to run after the trial period.

Councillor Roche hoped it would be extended, but would not know until this had been evaluated. Initially the project it had been successful and still had another year yet to run.

(21) Councillor Cowles was becoming increasingly concerned at the uncontrolled percentage increase in precepts coming from the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Fire Authority and also from Parish Councils. They were simply using residents as a milk cow so asked if anything could be done to limit their demands?

The Leader explained if a properly anti-austerity Government were elected to fund public services the precept would not need to be increased quite so much.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cowles explained there appeared to be no real democratic mandate for the precepts and when attending a Parish Council meeting they usually followed along the lines that it was only so much a week or a month. It was Councillor Cowles' view that Parish Councils hide behind the Local Authority because the precept was collected for them by RMBC on their behalf.

As a resident if he refused to pay the Parish Council precept his argument was no longer with the Parish Council, but with the Council because he would not have paid his full council tax. If inflation was only running at two or three percent surely it was not justifiable for people to start raising their precepts by ten percent, fifteen, twenty or in some cases even thirty percent as an increase in the precept. He, therefore, asked the Leader if the Council could not take up this matter was Parish Councils.

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The Leader pointed out Parish Councils were elected bodies and elected by their own residents who made their own decisions independently. Whilst the Council may individually have a view about any decision that an individual Parish Council took it was important that their rights were respected. If it was felt that the Parish Councillors were not making the right decisions then the election of Parish Councillors would need to be done in the same way as if people did not think Borough Councillors were making good decisions. The Council set the budgets collectively, so it was not a matter for individuals, but all together.

173. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.