

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of the City of Sheffield held on Wednesday 9 September 2020, at 2.00 pm, as a remote meeting in accordance with the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, and pursuant to notice duly given and Summonses duly served.

**PRESENT**

THE LORD MAYOR (Councillor Tony Downing)  
THE DEPUTY LORD MAYOR (Councillor Gail Smith)

1	<i>Beauchief &amp; Greenhill Ward</i> Simon Clement-Jones Bob Pullin Richard Shaw	10	<i>East Ecclesfield Ward</i> Andy Bainbridge Vic Bowden Moya O'Rourke	19	<i>Nether Edge &amp; Sharrow Ward</i> Peter Garbutt Jim Steinke Alison Teal
2	<i>Beighton Ward</i> Bob McCann Chris Rosling-Josephs Sophie Wilson	11	<i>Ecclesall Ward</i> Roger Davison Barbara Masters Shaffaq Mohammed	20	<i>Park &amp; Arbourthorne</i> Ben Miskell Jack Scott
3	<i>Birley Ward</i> Denise Fox Bryan Lodge Karen McGowan	12	<i>Firth Park Ward</i> Abdul Khayum Alan Law Abtisam Mohamed	21	<i>Richmond Ward</i> Mike Drabble Dianne Hurst
4	<i>Broomhill &amp; Sharrow Vale Ward</i> Angela Argenzio Kaltum Rivers	13	<i>Fulwood Ward</i> Sue Alston Andrew Sangar	22	<i>Shiregreen &amp; Brightside Ward</i> Dawn Dale Peter Price Garry Weatherall
5	<i>Burngreave Ward</i> Jackie Drayton Talib Hussain Mark Jones	14	<i>Gleadless Valley Ward</i> Lewis Dagnall Cate McDonald Paul Turpin	23	<i>Southey Ward</i> Mike Chaplin Tony Damms Jayne Dunn
6	<i>City Ward</i> Douglas Johnson Ruth Mersereau Martin Phipps	15	<i>Graves Park Ward</i> Ian Auckland Sue Auckland Steve Ayris	24	<i>Stannington Ward</i> David Baker Penny Baker Vickie Priestley
7	<i>Crookes &amp; Crosspool Ward</i> Tim Huggan Mohammed Mahroof Anne Murphy	16	<i>Hillsborough Ward</i> Bob Johnson Josie Paszek	25	<i>Stocksbridge &amp; Upper Don Ward</i> Julie Grocutt Francyne Johnson
8	<i>Darnall Ward</i> Mazher Iqbal Mary Lea Zahira Naz	17	<i>Manor Castle Ward</i> Terry Fox Sioned-Mair Richards	26	<i>Walkley Ward</i> Ben Curran Neale Gibson
9	<i>Dore &amp; Totley Ward</i> Joe Otten Colin Ross Martin Smith	18	<i>Mosborough Ward</i> Tony Downing Kevin Oxley Gail Smith	27	<i>West Ecclesfield Ward</i> Alan Hooper Adam Hurst Mike Levery
				28	<i>Woodhouse Ward</i> Mick Rooney Jackie Satur Paul Wood

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jack Clarkson, Julie Dore, George Lindars-Hammond, Peter Rippon and Cliff Woodcraft.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest made by Members of the Council.

**3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS**

3.1 Petitions

3.1.1 Petition Requesting a “Walk With Pride” Crossing in Sheffield

The Council received an electronic petition containing 511 signatures, requesting a “Walk with Pride” crossing in Sheffield.

Representations on behalf of the petitioners were made by Eleanor Coppard, who stated that the petition requested a permanent installation of the Pride crossing. The petition was launched in June. She stated that there had not been Pride celebrations in Sheffield this year and commented that it was a much under-represented part of the community.

The temporary crossing had been put into place outside the Town Hall and it had been very warmly received. There had been interest in the campaign and in supporting it from Radio Sheffield, Exposed magazine and Now Then magazine. The Council was asked to implement a permanent installation of the crossing.

The Council referred the petition to Councillor Bob Johnson, Cabinet Member for Transport and Development.

Councillor Johnson thanked Eleanor for bringing the petition to Council. He said that on 24 June, the Council installed a rainbow crossing on Pinstone Street as part the Covid 19 temporary relocation of highway. The road markings had been implemented on a semi pedestrianised and prominent area. He also believed that the crossing had been well received. Proposals to further enhance the public realm on Pinstone Street were being developed and, although the crossing was implemented as part of temporary measures on Pinstone Street, the Council would look at trying to retain a rainbow crossing at a location in the City Centre. The Council would need to make sure it was compliant with the relevant regulations and that appropriate traffic signals and signs were located beside it. However, these were not major concerns and the principle that a rainbow crossing was retained in the City Centre was something that he would support.

### 3.2 Public Questions

The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) invited two members of the public to ask questions which they had submitted prior to the published deadline for submission of questions. There had been an additional question received after the submission deadline from a member of the public, and the Lord Mayor stated that the questioner had been advised to submit his question directly to the relevant Cabinet Member, or alternatively to submit it to the next meeting of the Council or next meeting of the Cabinet.

#### 3.2.1 Public Questions Concerning John Lewis Partnership

Nigel Slack made reference to the good news that the deal with John Lewis Partnership had been concluded and that the retail store would retain its presence in Sheffield. He asked the Council to now address the questions put at the last Cabinet meeting, namely:-

- What was the value of the capital contribution, for refurbishment, within this deal?
- Will this deal be an overall positive contribution to the Council's coffers or a cost?
- How many jobs were being safeguarded by this deal, compared to current levels?
- Will the online turnover of John Lewis (reported by them as being 60 to 70%) be included in the "... rent based on turnover"?

Councillor Mazher Iqbal, the Cabinet Member for Business and Investment, responded to the question and said that he agreed with Mr Slack that the deal with John Lewis was fantastic news for the City. He said that John Lewis was part of the original retail quarter plans and it was wonderful news that 7 years on, they had committed to Sheffield. He commented that retail stores up and down the country had unfortunately closed. However, John Lewis was a major retail anchor and it was great to have them in the City. He thanked colleagues for persevering while this deal was concluded.

Councillor Iqbal said that, in relation to the first question regarding capital contribution for refurbishment, unfortunately he could not disclose information because the value of that contribution was subject to a procurement process, which would be led by John Lewis and Partners, so, at this stage, such a disclosure of information would prejudice their commercial interests and he hoped that Mr Slack could appreciate the circumstances.

As regards to the second question and as to whether the deal would

be an overall positive contribution to the Council coffers, he said that it was great news for the City in retaining major anchor institutions such as John Lewis which did not only benefit John Lewis or the city centre but was positive news for the City. Very recently, Radisson Blu, the new hotel operator in the Heart of the City scheme, had signed the agreement and the New World Trading Company had also recently signed an agreement. This showed the huge benefits that John Lewis would bring to the City Centre and to the City.

Councillor Iqbal said that, in relation to the third question concerning the safeguarding of jobs, he had recently spoken with the John Lewis Store Manager. In Sheffield, John Lewis employed approximately 300 staff and there were also additional staff who came in to do the beauty treatments etc, which represented a further 400 people. Keeping John Lewis in the City Centre and the additional benefits and the confidence it had given others was difficult to put a price on. Ultimately, decisions relating to jobs were for John Lewis to decide. It was known that retailers up and down the country had shed jobs.

Other places, such as Bolton were in lockdown because of the cases of Coronavirus and it was not known what support was being provided beyond the furlough scheme and therefore, he could not really comment on how many jobs could be safeguarded.

In relation to the final question concerning the rent and turnover of John Lewis, Councillor Iqbal stated that this was confidential information held by John Lewis.

### 3.2.2 Public Question Concerning Coronavirus and Return to School

Nigel Slack said that the pressure from the government to get children and staff back into schools and to get people back into their offices seemed premature considering the continuing and increasing levels of new infections each week. He said that a number of schools had been impacted by new outbreaks and the same was likely to be inevitable in large office scenarios.

Mr Slack said that even in Sheffield, the situation was volatile with new cases down one week and up the next. Overall, the country's new cases per day were no better than when the lockdown was initially implemented and local lockdowns were riddled with inconsistencies. He said that, if the Council did not feel safe resuming face to face meetings in the Council Chamber, why should this city be falling in line with the decision makers in central government and condemning the families of schoolchildren to put themselves at risk?

He stated that there may be a 'vanishingly small' death rate but each death was a person who's life had been cut short in what he said was a cruel and economically driven policy set by the government and not opposed by this Council.

Councillor Abtisam Mohamed, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, responded to the questions. She stated that the Council had been working with schools during the summer term and the summer holidays to ensure schools complied with the national guidance on social distancing. Whilst she acknowledged the points that Mr Slack had made in relation to safety, she said that ultimately children needed to be in school and there was a need to ensure that children were accessing full time education.

Schools had done really well in their preparation for compliance with social distancing measures and ensuring they had comprehensive risk assessments. They had also been supported with guidance from the Department for Health and Sheffield's Director of Public Health.

Whilst it was recognised that there could be 'bubbles' of children sent home, this was part of the risk assessment process and making sure that children and families were protected and kept as safe as possible.

It was also recognised that it would only ever be completely safe when there was a vaccine for Covid-19 and, until then, there was a need to make sure safe processes were in operation and to ensure that schools were complying with the risk assessments to ensure that the school environment was as safe as possible. There had been a number of schools that had sent small pupil 'bubbles' home and there had been a couple of incidents where year groups had been sent home.

However, the overwhelming majority of schools had said they were working hard to meeting the Covid-safe requirements. The feedback had been positive and over the next couple of weeks, the Council would work closely with schools to make sure that they offered support to students, including health and wellbeing support as well as additional educational support as was needed to reduce the disadvantage gap.

### 3.2.3 Public Questions Concerning Planning and Leases

Nigel Slack asked the following questions concerning planning and leases:

- In order of precedence in current decision making protocols, does Planning approval trump the decision making of Cabinet Members when it comes to decisions on leasing Council land?
- Could a developer, who is in negotiation with the Council over a lease, force the hand of Council to approve a lease arrangement by that developer gaining planning approval before the lease decision is made?
- Should any planning decision be delayed until the lease negotiations and decision, including any necessary public

consultation, was concluded?

Councillor Bob Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Development, responded to the questions.

He said that, decisions made by the Council as a Local Planning Authority were carried out as a quasi-judicial body and were entirely separate from any decisions the Council may make as a landowner. The circumstances of Covid-19 had not affected decision making in that regard and changes had not been made in relation to it. A developer that had obtained planning approval could not force the granting of a lease from the Council as these were two separate issues. However, it would not be appropriate to delay a planning decision whilst a lease negotiation took place and again, that was because the two things were totally separate.

#### 3.2.4 Public Questions Concerning Youth Services

Ruth Hubbard commented that given the cuts nationally to youth services in the past ten years, she welcomed the Council's plans to invest more money in youth services. She said that what was happening for young people was of importance to communities and community groups across Sheffield.

She made reference to the intention to bring youth services 'in-house', so that they will no longer be run by Sheffield Futures. She commented that many people supported a direction of travel to bring services in-house, especially where run by the private sector for profit.

Ruth Hubbard raised the following issues and questions:

1. The charity Sheffield Futures was run by a Board that consisted of a range of significant stakeholders with expertise from across different sectors and settings. The Council was proposing a Project Board chaired by its own Director of Communities and with its own officers from Legal, Finance, Human Resources and Commercial Services. She said that it might appear that bringing youth services in-house was, in part, a cover for accruing yet more power to the few under 'strong leader' governance model. She asked whether the Council would commit to ensuring that other key stakeholders were involved as full partners in youth service governance on the Board; will it ensure this includes significant professional youth and community work expertise; and will the Council also commit to ensuring that there were resources and mechanisms that significantly involve young people themselves in decision-making about youth services and how they are run.
2. At the heart of excellent youth services was a commitment to young people's voice and them playing a full role in their communities and as active citizens in democracy. Young

people in Sheffield had themselves consistently called for more say and for better local, community-based democracy, notably at the Council governance review and in the Council task and finish group on the voice and influence of young people and which was warmly received by the relevant Scrutiny Committee. Given that no power was devolved to local communities in the city governance, what prospect was there for young people to have more power in shaping our city's future?

3. Youth work and what was happening in communities was integrally linked. Yet, the Council reports she had seen did not seem to have the input of youth work expertise that would recognise this and the word 'community' was barely mentioned, if at all. What youth work expertise was being drawn on in Council planning; and what information sharing, consultation and direct planning work was going on with local communities across the city about in-house youth service plans so that community activities and added value was maximised, and so that locally based and voluntary youth work services could better link up with Council youth service plans and provision.

Councillor Jackie Drayton, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families responded to the questions. She thanked Ruth Hubbard for asking the questions and for recognising that there had been very little funding for youth services in the context of austerity over the past ten years and that despite that, the Council had identified some funding for youth services. She said that the Council and the city recognised that young people were our future and the more that could be done to help and enable them to lead successful and productive lives, the better it was both for them and also for the City.

Councillor Drayton stated in relation to the first question, that the Council recognised the great work that Sheffield Futures and its staff had done for the City. It was a priority for the Council, in the immediate term, to ensure a safe transfer of services back to the Council, having sought to bring the services in-house. The creation of services for the future would include appropriate models of working in partnership, including with the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector and youth providers across the city and the police and health services and so the Council would be working with partners. The report to the Cabinet on this matter also talked about the importance of engaging and working with young people in relation to their services and there was a clear expectation from all Members that the new model would be built upon that.

In relation to the second question and in talking about the heart of excellent youth services being the commitment to young people's voice and them playing a role and not only in the services that were provided for them but in general, Councillor Drayton said that she believed that young people also had a lot to say about services for older people. That was why young people had been part of service

commissioning projects as young commissioners and training had taken place for young people to become young commissioners. Young people had also been involved in interviews for senior members of staff in the Council and young people had been involved in policy development.

Councillor Drayton said that specifically, there were young people on the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Union who had shaped the services and the policies that were in place for them and for other young people and for other services in the City. Therefore, the Council felt this was important and would continue to do that and expand it, whenever it could and to make sure, in relation to the new service, that young people's voice was intrinsic to the new model and they were part of it. And so, rather than the Council saying what it was going to be like and young people agreeing, the approach would be one of co-production and that was something which there was a reputation for doing in relation to children and families in other areas of the local authority and other services.

In reference to the third set of questions, Councillor Drayton stated that a lot of Councillors and staff had been or were involved in youth and community work, and so there were Councillors with expertise in youth work and also many officers had youth training and the Executive Director for People Services, who would have oversight of the youth services project, started in youth work and that was his background. So, the Council did have the skills and knowledge but it did not have it all and therefore it would be looking and sharing and learning not only from other youth providers in the city, but also from other places and from other organisations.

Councillor Drayton said that the Executive Director was keeping an overview of all the changes, which she believed was invaluable. The Council would be recruiting for a new head of service for young people and she said there was no doubt that young people would be involved in that process and the Council would make sure it had somebody who had experience in that area of work.

This area of work was covered by three Cabinet Members' portfolios, namely the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and her own portfolio, Children and Families. Many other Cabinet Members and local Councillors across the City also had a very strong voice about what should be done for our young people.

Councillor Drayton said that she would also send a written answer to the questions that Ruth Hubbard had asked.

#### **4. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

##### **4.1 Urgent Business**



There were no questions relating to urgent business under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.6(ii).

#### 4.2 Written Questions

A schedule of questions to Cabinet Members, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16, and which contained written answers, was circulated. Supplementary questions, under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.4, were asked and were answered by the appropriate Cabinet Members until the expiry of the 30 minute time limit for Members' Questions (in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.7).

#### 4.3 South Yorkshire Joint Authorities

4.3.1 The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) reported that Councillor Douglas Johnson had given advance notice of a question relating to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority. The question was "When can Elected Members expect Fire Service reports on special interest incidents to be resumed?". The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Tony Damms, the Council's Spokesperson on the Fire and Rescue Authority, to provide a response.

4.3.2 Councillor Damms stated that he had raised this with the Fire Service and had been informed that this matter should be resolved shortly. He added that it would be helpful if Councillor Johnson could contact him to outline what aspects of a special interest incident he felt should be highlighted, and he would then convey this to the Fire Service with a view to ensuring this was built into the reports to be prepared for circulation to Members.

### 5. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETINGS**

5.1 RESOLVED: On the Motion of Councillor Dianne Hurst, seconded by Councillor Andy Bainbridge, that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020, the special meeting of the Council held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020, and the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020, be approved as true and accurate records.

### 6. **REPRESENTATION, DELEGATED AUTHORITY AND RELATED ISSUES**

6.1 RESOLVED: On the Motion of Councillor Dianne Hurst, seconded by Councillor David Baker, that:-

(a) approval be given to the following changes to the memberships of Committees, Boards, etc.:-

Children, Young People and Family Support  
Scrutiny and Policy  
Development Committee - Councillors Anne Murphy and Garry Weatherall to fill vacancies

Safer and Stronger - Councillor Adam Hurst to fill a

Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee vacancy

(b) representatives be appointed to serve on other bodies as follows:-

Manor and Castle Development Trust - Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards to fill a vacancy

Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust - Council of Governors - Councillor Adam Hurst to serve a further term of office ending 04/09/2023

## **7. FORMAT OF THE COUNCIL MEETING IN OCTOBER**

7.1 It was moved by Councillor Dianne Hurst, and seconded by Councillor Andy Bainbridge, that approval be given to the recommendations in the report of the Director of Legal and Governance now submitted, regarding the format of the meeting of the Council to be held on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

7.2 Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed, seconded by Councillor David Baker, as an amendment, that the recommendations in the report of the Director of Legal and Governance in relation to the format of the Council meeting in October, be approved with the following changes:-

1. the deletion in Paragraph 1 of all of the words after the words "Members Questions" and the addition of the following words at the end of paragraph 1 as follows:-

"and a Notice of Motion from each group represented on the Council."

2. The deletion of paragraph 2.

7.3 It was then moved by Councillor Martin Phipps, seconded by Councillor Douglas Johnson, as an amendment, that the recommendations in the report of the Director of Legal and Governance in relation to the format of the Council meeting in October, be approved with the following changes:-

the deletion of all of the words after the words "Agree that the October meeting of the Council will include Public Questions and Petitions, and Members Questions".'

and the addition of the following words at the end of paragraph 1:-

“and Notices of Motion”

7.4 After contributions from seven other Members, and following a right of reply from Councillor Dianne Hurst, the amendment moved by Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed was put to the vote and was negated.

7.4.1 The votes on the amendment were ordered to be recorded and were as follows:-

For the amendment (32) - The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Gail Smith) and Councillors Simon Clement-Jones, Bob Pullin, Richard Shaw, Bob McCann, Angela Argenzio, Kaltum Rivers, Douglas Johnson, Ruth Mersereau, Martin Phipps, Tim Huggan, Mohammed Mahroof, Joe Otten, Colin Ross, Martin Smith, Vic Bowden, Roger Davison, Barbara Masters, Shaffaq Mohammed, Sue Alston, Andrew Sangar, Paul Turpin, Ian Auckland, Steve Ayris, Kevin Oxley, Peter Garbutt, Alison Teal, David Baker, Penny Baker, Vickie Priestley, Alan Hooper and Mike Levery.

Against the amendment - (43) The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) and Councillors Chris Rosling Josephs, Sophie Wilson, Denise Fox, Bryan Lodge, Karen McGowan, Jackie Drayton, Talib Hussain, Mark Jones, Anne Murphy, Mazher Iqbal, Mary Lea, Zahira Naz, Andy Bainbridge, Moya O'Rourke, Abdul Khayum, Alan Law, Abtisam Mohamed, Lewis Dagnall, Cate McDonald, Bob Johnson, Josie Paszek, Terry Fox, Sioned-Mair Richards, Jim Steinke, Ben Miskell, Jack Scott, Mike Drabble, Dianne Hurst, Dawn Dale, Peter Price, Garry Weatherall, Mike Chaplin, Tony Damms, Jayne Dunn, Julie Grocutt, Francyne Johnson, Ben Curran,

Neale Gibson, Adam Hurst, Mick Rooney, Jackie Satur and Paul Wood.

Abstained from voting on - Nil  
the amendment (0)

7.5 The amendment moved by Councillor Martin Phipps was then put to the vote and was also negated.

7.6 The original Motion was then put to the vote and carried as follows:-

RESOLVED: That:-

(a) it be agreed that the October meeting of the Council will include Public Questions and Petitions, and Members Questions, but that Notices of Motion are not to be a feature of the meeting and that, instead, an officer update will be provided to Council on a topical subject; and

(b) in order to implement the changes proposed in paragraph (a) above, approval be given to the temporary revisions to Part 4 of the Constitution (Council Procedure Rules), as set out in the report, which are to apply only for the duration of that meeting.

## **8. CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE**

8.1 Greg Fell, the Director of Public Health, provided an update on the latest position in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Mr Fell's presentation was followed by an opportunity for Members of the Council to ask questions.

8.2 He outlined what could be ascertained about the Coronavirus from the epidemiology, key messages and areas of concern and the arrangements that were in place to manage the pandemic from a public health perspective.

8.3 He said that the weekly surveillance report, as published by Public Health England, was the key report in terms of what was happening in the country and he then summarised the national position, which was one of a rising number of Covid 19 cases. He also set out the position in Sheffield and South Yorkshire relative to other places, including West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. The number of cases in Sheffield was relatively low and the spatial spread of cases more diffuse in the past 30 days. Household clusters are also more diffuse although these remained associated with more deprived areas. The age profile had changed, with the average age of people with positive tests for Covid 19 now being people in their mid-30s, rather than people in their 60s earlier in the pandemic. The ethnicity of people affected had also significantly changed.

- 8.4 Mr Fell explained that the strategy was owned by the Coronavirus Prevention and Management Board and based on four principles, namely: to keep people safe; protect the vulnerable; reopen Sheffield; and to follow government guidance, and the Council was trying to keep to those principles in relation to its decision making.
- 8.5 There was an operational plan which covered a range of issues including outbreak response arrangements, intelligence and epidemiology, contact tracing, support to those who were self-isolating, communications and engagement, different settings (including care homes, school and workplaces), high risk places and communities, local testing capacity and vulnerable people. An operational management board was established and the appropriate operational arrangements were in place to deliver the elements of the strategy to keep the level of virus as low as possible.
- 8.6 Greg Fell said that looking ahead, he would contend that the broad strategy was right. There would be an increasing level of cases and a substantial impact from the opening of schools and universities, which needed to happen but meant that people mixed which would cause viral transmission and there was an increasing rate of cases nationally.
- 8.7 He said that, whilst there was not a need to change the Strategy, there was a need to intensify efforts around prevention, the management of individual outbreaks, communications, contact tracing and isolation.
- 8.8 However, he did not think there was a need to fundamentally change course. It was likely that there would be more localised contact tracing. The Council was working with NHS test and trace and at this time 74 percent of cases and contacts were completed and there was more that could be done subject to resources from the government. It was possible that shielding would be restarted and that would be a national policy decision and there was also significant activity relating to flu vaccinations. An increasing amount of activity inside during the winter months presented greater risk of viral transmission. The number of cases would rise in the autumn.
- 8.9 It was likely that a workable vaccine would not be available this calendar year. A response to Covid 19 would be in place for at least the next 18 months and at the same time it was necessary to also try to proceed with business as usual.
- 8.10 The city was seeking to avoid an imposed local lockdown and harmful social and economic effects. At the moment, whilst there were cases of Covid 19, the related hospital activity was low. Testing capacity was stretched and it was hoped that this was a transient and short term problem that was manageable. The emphasis was on testing those with symptoms and not those who

were asymptomatic.

- 8.11 Greg Fell said that there was more that could be done to improve contact tracing and isolation and that was progressing. Whilst the return of schools and universities was concerning, that activity had to continue. It was very important to protect those who were vulnerable and whilst at present cases were apparent in young people who were well, it might be that there was transmission to older, more medically vulnerable, people and measures may need to be introduced again, including shielding care home residents and older people living at home who were vulnerable.
- 8.12 There was a concern about intervention fatigue and it was important to stick with the programme and look at the basic principles. There were also conspiracy theories relating to the Coronavirus and Mr Fell asked people to let him know if they became aware of such issues.
- 8.13 He said that the core messages were constant. These were, in order:-
- if you have a symptom, get tested, stay home, isolate, give details of your contacts; seek help and advice if needed
  - stay at home if you are identified as a contact
  - wash your hands
  - keep your distance
  - wear face coverings where recommended
- 8.14 Members of the Council asked questions arising from the update from the Director of Public Health and responses were provided, as summarised below:-
- 8.15 Questions were asked firstly about testing capacity and concerns about the government's narrative relating to testing and specifically, whether it was thought that 25 percent of people presenting for testing in Sheffield should not be; was it acceptable that, even with enhanced capacity, it would take six months to test everybody and was that helpful in the ability to fight the spread of the pandemic. Secondly, a question was asked concerning messages about whom people could meet, what venues were and were not allowed, such as swimming pools and as to whether there was guidance that could help make things clearer.
- 8.16 In response, Greg Fell stated that swimming facilities were still open. There were further changes being introduced from 14 September but he had not heard of a substantial shift in relation to the national rules around what people could or could not do in relation to sports or leisure centres.
- 8.17 He said that all social interaction from people outside of one's family

carried risk and people could minimise that risk. In his opinion, the rules were overly complex and might be simplified. If someone was going swimming, for example, the risk was relatively low.

- 8.18 There were substantial numbers of people seeking tests who did not have symptoms and the reasons why there was a national lab capacity problem (with the mega labs in Glasgow, Milton Keynes and Manchester) were that, firstly, schools went back in Scotland before Sheffield, which had led to a large increase in testing, and which arguably could and may have been anticipated; secondly, significant numbers of people were seeking a test when they did not have symptoms.
- 8.19 Mr Fell explained that in terms of public health activity which would follow a test, asymptomatic testing was not considered particularly high value in the present circumstances. There were nonetheless substantial differences in the United States where they were advocating asymptomatic testing. However, in terms of value, he would start with those that were very ill in hospital, who definitely needed to be tested and then those that were ill but did not have serious symptoms. As to the testing of people with no symptoms, he knew there were a significant number but was unable to be certain of the exact proportion.
- 8.20 The third reason for the lab capacity problems was people coming back from holidays overseas and wanting to get a test to say that they did not have an illness and so they did not have to quarantine for the specified duration and that was affecting finite lab capacity and causing operational problems.
- 8.21 He said that he believed the Department of Health was working hard to address the problems relating to lab capacity. If this was a genuine short term problem, the city could probably cope, although it would cause problems. However, if it was a longer term issue, he would want to know immediately, because there would be a need to work on contingency plans.
- 8.22 Finally, there was probably a difference between surveillance and symptomatic testing. The Office of National Statistics did a weekly surveillance where they did both antibody and swab tests for a sample of one hundred thousand people nationally. That was one of the things included in the weekly Public Health England epidemiology report and it was helpful to give a sense of what was happening in respect of the epidemiology. That was very different to someone developing a symptom and then seeking a test and which should lead to a public health action. The surveillance was about the epidemiology and what was happening to the population nationally. It did not provide much insight into what was happening at a particular place, such as Sheffield.
- 8.23 A question was asked in relation to support for cities with

universities in respect of the additional pressures associated with an increased population and in particular, firstly whether there was additional funding or support and secondly how the Council would be working with the universities and to help communities with student populations which were often living in areas with other residential housing, so as to support community cohesion and given concerns expressed by some residents and the current relatively high number of Covid 19 cases in younger people.

- 8.24 Greg Fell said that both universities and the College had worked extensively with the public health team and others in the Council since the spring to plan for when the universities opened. He said that he was satisfied that both universities and the College took the matter very seriously and they had done a huge amount of operational planning for managing how they would reopen in a phased and as low risk a way as possible; and the right arrangements were in place for responding to cases and outbreaks as and when they occurred.
- 8.25 The universities and the College had established 'gold' groups and had planned how teaching and campus environments would work and this planning included the student unions. It was felt that the campus learning and teaching environments were as safe in relation to Covid-19 as they could be. A concern was what happened off campus, which was unregulated space, whereas student union bars were regulated space as were other licensed premises.
- 8.26 He said that a key concern was house parties and similar events. The recent changes relating to restrictions on groups of more than 6 people effectively ended large house parties. The universities were also involved in this issue and would be using their staff to undertake communications and messaging with student bodies regarding responsible behaviours to help prevent a spike in cases which eventually spread to the older population and a further lockdown which would be detrimental to everyone. There was also planning for harder edged enforcements with the police, the detail of which would require more work. In summary, Mr Fell said that he was as content as he could be that the universities and colleges were going to open safely but acknowledged that it could be difficult for a time.
- 8.27 Greg Fell stated that there was no additional resourcing for university cities. Whilst both universities had asked to establish a specific testing site for students, he said that he did not believe that was feasible or warranted and instead he wanted more accessible testing sites for the population as a whole, including students. Sites were being explored around Uppertorpe at the moment with the University of Sheffield and this was subject to technical and site feasibility activity. However, he did not think that special testing facilities would be established for the student population.



- 8.28 A question was asked about the messaging from the universities and whether this was clear enough and also about the location of testing facilities on campus, as other universities were planning to do as well as providing students with masks.
- 8.29 A further question was asked about the mental health support for students in Sheffield who might be living with others that they did not know and given the restrictions around meeting others.
- 8.30 Greg Fell was thanked for his recent quick response to correspondence regarding the wearing of masks on public transport and visual communications about the correct way to wear a mask.
- 8.31 Mr Fell said that the Council's communications team had and would continue to do work in relation to the wearing of masks and face coverings. Both universities had done a lot of communication but he could not say whether it was effective or clear and consistent enough and the same might also be said in relation to other communications and the messages were often difficult and complex. Communications relating to Coronavirus would need to continue. He said that he would ask the universities about feedback they had received from students.
- 8.32 Comments were made concerning the rising number of cases of Covid 19 and community transmission together with challenges for schools when students moved between classrooms. Questions were asked about plans for freshers' week and in relation to students living in communities.
- 8.33 Greg Fell explained that the freshers' weeks had been extensively considered by both universities and the student unions and they were clear that freshers' week would look very different this year and there would not be large student union organised parties.
- 8.34 What was of concern were advertised large scale raves, which the Council's licensing team had investigated and he thought that events would not be happening. There would be clubs and pubs that wished to organise events for freshers' week and the Council would use its staffing resource and enforcement powers and work with the police and take action as appropriate, from education through to enforcement.
- 8.35 Both universities and student unions had been clear with regard to their communications that freshers' week would be different and, although it was difficult to anticipate in advance what would happen in relation to the behaviour of students, the organisations were sighted on the issue and it was a concern.
- 8.36 A councillor shared their personal experience of the condition 'long Covid'. This included the physical and mental health challenges and effects, cycles of relapse and recovery and significantly reduced

capacity. Most people with 'long Covid' had a different profile to those who were subject to the NHS Covid Recovery programme. They were not hospitalised and many of them were young and previously healthy and were reliant upon their GP, her experience of which had been positive with necessary referrals for testing, including for neurological symptoms. There was also increasing research in relation to the long term health implications for people who had contracted Covid 19.

- 8.37 Questions were asked about whether, in Sheffield, data was being gathered about 'long Covid'; what was being done to raise awareness in relation to 'long Covid' among GPs and in primary care as to the seriousness of the condition and given apparent disparities in the way people were being treated; and was anything being done to make sure that people were getting the correct referrals from their GP, such as referrals to cardiology or neurology.
- 8.38 Greg Fell extended his sympathy to the Councillor for her illness and responded that he was pleased that the Councillor's experience as regards her GP was a relatively good one. He said that six months ago, nothing was known in relation to the virus and little was known about the epidemiology of 'long Covid' and a picture was slowly beginning to emerge. A member of the public health team had done a significant piece of work on the impact of Covid, which he believed was to be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board and a recommendation of that work was for more structured and systematic surveillance epidemiology.
- 8.39 In relation to the response of primary care, he thought that it was an uneven picture, partly depending on GP experience of patients with 'long Covid' and therefore a lot of work was required to increase knowledge and skills in the clinical community and particularly GPs. At present, there was emerging intelligence in relation to 'long Covid' coming from different places and which was not as systematic as he would like it to be.
- 8.40 Questions were asked about areas of the City in relation to which there were concerns and what was being put in place based on learning from the pandemic; whether awareness was being raised in those areas and if intervention measures were being put in place.
- 8.41 A question was asked concerning mental health relating to the pandemic and as to what the Council could do and what partnerships there were with the NHS.
- 8.42 A further question was asked about what was being done with schools, including academies in the context of some cases having been reported of Covid 19 in schools and how working parents might cope with their child being sent home and with regards to teachers who might be vulnerable.

- 8.43 A question was asked as to whether there would be a maximum capacity of 30 persons placed upon places of worship as a result of the recent government announcements.
- 8.44 Greg Fell responded that he had not heard the announcement from the Prime Minister which was happening at the same time as this meeting and so did not know the answer to the question concerning places of worship, although it was possible that there would be restrictions.
- 8.45 Mr Fell explained that all schools had worked extensively with the Council's Director of Education, the Public Health team and Learn Sheffield to conduct comprehensive risk assessments and implement them in relation to how school buildings and staff would operate within the school and individual health and safety risk assessments for all staff. Significant changes had been made to the way that school buildings and school staff operate. Concerns relating to staff that were very medically vulnerable were addressed by either the national shielding guidance or school risk assessments. Where staff had expressed concerns, those matters would need to be taken up with the Headteacher concerned.
- 8.46 In reference to mental health, Greg Fell explained that, whilst it would be preferable not to set up specific mental health services to deal with the impact of the Coronavirus, there should be improvements in mental health services more widely, including preventative and treatment services. This included the range of low level to specialist services commissioned by the Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England and provided by the Health and Social Care Trust or other organisations. He said that there had been underinvestment in mental health services for decades and there were improvements that should be made to mental health services.
- 8.47 Mr Fell said that he was concerned about Sheffield as a whole, although previously, he had been worried about the suburbs to the east of the city centre, where cases were occurring at the time. Accordingly, in those areas, there was intervention, new testing sites were established and there was community oriented work in particular wards and this had been successful in keeping transmission of the virus relatively low. There was also a shift in the nature of the epidemiology from it being predominantly in the South Asian population to being about the population more generally. There was now a more diffuse but still relatively low level spread of cases across Sheffield as a whole.
- 8.48 A question was asked about the effectiveness of temporary lock downs in particular areas of the country.
- 8.49 A question was also asked concerning the enforcement of rules on public transport and responsibility for making sure that the rules

were applied.

- 8.50 Greg Fell responded that he did not think that there was anywhere that had been in lockdown, and then taken out of lockdown and that was now in lockdown again. He said that in Leicester, which had been subject to a local lockdown, the action taken had achieved the desired results in reducing rates of Covid 19 and there had been a range of other associated interventions. The view of the Chief Medical Officer was that, where areas had gone into lockdown, and with the intensive interventions associated with lockdown, including enforcement and certain restrictions of people's liberties, the desired results of reducing rates of illness had been achieved with few exceptions. He said that there was a debate in relation to whether a whole place should be subject to lockdown or whether it might be restricted to the areas where transmission was much higher.
- 8.51 In relation to enforcement, he said that there might be a case for stronger enforcement. Use of face coverings was much higher now than it had been. However, he believed that on buses, nobody had the legal responsibility to enforce rules and there was a wish not to expect bus drivers to police this issue. On trains, the British Transport Police was able to enforce the rules. He believed that it was correct to say that bus companies did not have the same powers in that regard.
- 8.52 It was becoming apparent that the legal powers available under the Coronavirus Act were not as strong and clear as would be desirable and there was a grey area between guidance and what was enforceable under the law and further guidance was being sought from the government in relation to what the powers were.
- 8.53 A question was asked concerning whether there was data about the accuracy of the tests delivered locally. A separate issue was also raised concerning key workers and people working with vulnerable people and that had to be tested regularly by their employers and difficulty in access to testing kits; and whether those key workers could go to the local testing centres to be tested, if they were asymptomatic.
- 8.54 Greg Fell said that the accuracy of tests per day was measured in two metrics, namely sensitivity and specificity. The lab sensitivity was approximately 98 percent accurate. There was national data in this regard. Although the tests were not perfect, they were good enough for the purpose and there would always be some false negatives and occasionally false positives. Saliva tests were to become available, which were less accurate but would provide a faster result and wider coverage but at present, swab tests were the method used, which were as accurate as they could be and with reasonably good quality assurance.
- 8.55 He explained that, in relation to testing for asymptomatic key

workers, care home residents should be tested every 28 days and care home staff should be tested every seven days. This was a Department of Health programme. It was correct to say that there were difficulties in relation to asymptomatic testing and care homes being able to obtain testing kits and Directors of Public Health were pressing the Department of Health on that issue in order that it was resolved with some urgency.

- 8.56 With regard to care home staff and others working with vulnerable people using test centres instead, Mr Fell said that his personal view was that this was not practical, because it would be very difficult to manage operationally and it was probably not operationally possible to link the test results to a particular care home. His preference would be to manage the process care home by care home and which was how the national system was set up. However, the problems outlined as regards testing kits did need to be resolved.
- 8.57 A question was asked concerning a Covid 19 vaccine becoming available and assuming the most vulnerable were immunised through their GP and that hospitals were able to deal with their staff, what plans could be put in place to immunise other groups identified as a key priority, such as people that worked in care homes and in domestic care settings and other key worker groups, when a vaccine became available.
- 8.58 Greg Fell explained that there was a national plan and NHS England would be responsible for it. It was possible that the existing mass vaccination and treatment plan for pandemic flu would be used or that the established primary care arrangements as for seasonal flu might be used instead. There was also activity to promote seasonal flu vaccinations this year.
- 8.59 A question was asked about the balance of the relationship between local areas and central government, including as Director of Public Health and more broadly in respect of other partners and the government.
- 8.60 Greg Fell responded that the balance had shifted decisively both in respect of public health and more broadly. The early response to the pandemic was centrally driven. However, this was not optimal and the balance had moved from a national only response to a national and local response and both had to work in tandem and that was the case in relation to public health. More generally, there was acknowledgement of the importance of local government during the pandemic.
- 8.61 A question was asked about whether there was a standard approach in respect of care homes and it was observed that homes were operating in different ways in respect of visitors and residents taking exercise and arrangements in lockdown.

- 8.62 Greg Fell said that there was a standard approach and this included working within the national guidance. The guidance stated that a Director of Public Health would need to agree that care homes could accept visitors. He had agreed that care homes could have visitors, subject to high quality infection prevention and control. That had to be risk-assessed. It was evident what could happen in care homes when there was infection and there had been too many deaths in care homes. There was an attempt to balance the epidemiology, the public health impact and the risk of introducing infections into care homes with the benefits of people being able to visit people in care homes.
- 8.63 Care homes had been told that they knew what would work in their particular setting and that they would need to take responsibility. Care homes could not be forced to accept visitors and they needed to each decide whether conditions would enable them to make arrangements work with respect to visitors. Those conditions would vary from place to place and there would be different attitudes to risk. This was a problematic issue and there were consequences both in respect of the risk of infection and the benefits of people visiting, which were difficult to quantify. What could not be done was to force care homes to act in a certain way if they felt they were not prepared. However, they could be helped to try and achieve the right balance.
- 8.64 The Council noted the information reported and thanked the Director of Public Health for his update.

## **9. TRIBUTES TO FORMER COUNCILLORS PAT MIDGLEY AND HOWARD KNIGHT**

- 9.1 As had been agreed at the last meeting of the Council, the Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) provided an opportunity for Members of the Council to pay tribute to Councillor Pat Midgley and former Councillor Howard Knight, who sadly had died on 29<sup>th</sup> March and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020, respectively.
- 9.2 Councillor Pat Midgley had served as a Member of the Council since 1987 and was Lord Mayor during the Municipal Year 2000/01. Former Councillor Howard Knight had served on the Council from 1978 to 1994 and was Chair of Finance from 1988 to 1992.
- 9.3 Several Members of the Council spoke to pay tribute to them.
- 9.4 It was agreed to allocate time at the next meeting of the Council to pay tribute to former Councillors Mike Bower, Keith Hill, George Mathews and Alf Meade.

(NOTE: Prior to the start of the above tributes to former Councillors, it

was RESOLVED: On the motion of The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) and seconded by The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Gail Smith), that the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 5.5 be suspended and the termination of the meeting be extended to enable the tributes to be paid.)