

Agenda Item 3

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of the City of Sheffield held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH, on Wednesday 6 January 2016, at 2.00 pm, pursuant to notice duly given and Summonses duly served.

PRESENT

THE LORD MAYOR (Councillor Talib Hussain)
THE DEPUTY LORD MAYOR (Councillor Denise Fox)

1	<i>Arbourthorne Ward</i> Julie Dore Mike Drabble Jack Scott	10	<i>Dore & Totley Ward</i> Joe Otten Colin Ross	19	<i>Mosborough Ward</i> David Barker Isobel Bowler Tony Downing
2	<i>Beauchief & Greenhill Ward</i> Julie Gledhill Roy Munn Richard Shaw	11	<i>East Ecclesfield Ward</i> Pauline Andrews Steve Wilson Joyce Wright	20	<i>Nether Edge Ward</i> Nikki Bond Mohammad Maroof
3	<i>Beighton Ward</i> Helen Mirfin-Boukouris Chris Rosling-Josephs Ian Saunders	12	<i>Ecclesall Ward</i> Penny Baker Roger Davison Shaffaq Mohammed	21	<i>Richmond Ward</i> John Campbell Paul Wood
4	<i>Birley Ward</i> Denise Fox Bryan Lodge Karen McGowan	13	<i>Firth Park Ward</i> Sheila Constance Alan Law Garry Weatherall	22	<i>Shiregreen & Brightside Ward</i> Peter Price Sioned-Mair Richards Peter Rippon
5	<i>Broomhill Ward</i> Jayne Dunn Aodan Marken Brian Webster	14	<i>Fulwood Ward</i> Sue Alston Cliff Woodcraft	23	<i>Southey Ward</i> Leigh Bramall Tony Damms Gill Furniss
6	<i>Burngreave Ward</i> Jackie Drayton Ibrar Hussain Talib Hussain	15	<i>Gleadless Valley Ward</i> Steve Jones Cate McDonald Chris Peace	24	<i>Stannington Ward</i> David Baker Katie Condliffe Vickie Priestley
7	<i>Central Ward</i> Lewis Dagnall Robert Murphy Sarah Jane Smalley	16	<i>Graves Park Ward</i> Ian Auckland Steve Ayris Denise Reaney	25	<i>Stocksbridge & Upper Don Ward</i> Jack Clarkson Richard Crowther Keith Davis
8	<i>Crookes Ward</i> Rob Frost Anne Murphy Geoff Smith	17	<i>Hillsborough Ward</i> Bob Johnson George Lindars-Hammond Josie Paszek	26	<i>Walkley Ward</i> Ben Curran Neale Gibson
9	<i>Darnall Ward</i> Dianne Hurst Mazher Iqbal Mary Lea	18	<i>Manor Castle Ward</i> Jenny Armstrong Pat Midgley	27	<i>West Ecclesfield Ward</i> John Booker Adam Hurst
				28	<i>Woodhouse Ward</i> Mick Rooney Jackie Satur Ray Satur

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nasima Akther, Olivia Blake, Terry Fox, Lynn Rooney, Martin Smith, Andrew Sangar and Zoe Sykes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by Members of the Council.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

RESOLVED: On the Motion of Councillor Pat Midgley, seconded by Councillor Gill Furniss, that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2nd December 2015 be approved as a true and accurate record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Public Questions

4.1.1 Public Questions Concerning Housing Service

Alistair Tice asked if a current housing job matched a Housing Plus role, within the current housing restructure, why was it the Council's view that TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) regulations did not apply?

Paul Page asked why the Council's Housing data for the South East Housing Plus pilot showed very little change in satisfaction results at a time when managers had emailed one another stating that the satisfaction statistics have never been so low?

Matthew Green asked how the Council could justify a restructure in housing (MER 198 Housing Plus) that resulted in a £5,000 pay reduction for a Community Safety Warden and a £10,000 increase for a Housing Area Manager.

Councillor Jayne Dunn, the Cabinet Member for Housing responded that housing services had been brought back into the Council and were now being remodelled and restructured. TUPE regulations did not necessarily apply in circumstances such as these where a service was being remodelled.

Councillor Dunn stated that with regard to the data for the South East Housing Plus pilot, she had not seen the emails to which the question referred and said that if these were forwarded to her, then she would be able to provide comment. The statistics had been independently audited and had been favourable.

Councillor Dunn said that as part of the restructure, community safety functions had been brought together with the Housing job roles and were considered in line

with other similar Council jobs. With regard to the grading system, this was agreed by the Council and the Trades Unions. In circumstances where an employee did not feel that their new role had been graded correctly, they would be able to request a grading review when the new structure was implemented. Pay protection for two years would be available for employees and if in some circumstances people were still at a financial disadvantage they would be supported in finding another job role. Certain manager roles were to be paid more because of the increased responsibilities of the post.

4.1.2 Public Questions Concerning Highways Trees

Dave Dilner referred to the Hot Seat show on BBC Radio Sheffield and stated that Councillor Dore had said on that radio programme that the Council had “set up a Tree Panel, people within the trees campaign will contribute to it”. He said that he had seen no evidence of people having been asked to contribute and that answers to questions put concerning the Panel had not been forthcoming. He asked what the Leader had been referring.

Calvin Payne referred to comments made by Councillor Terry Fox, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport which suggested that there had been reports of campaigners having tried to stop felling teams from removing dangerous trees and that they were asked to desist from doing so as they might put themselves, the public and felling teams in danger. He asked for details of where this had happened and for a possible apology for inferring that campaigners had put people in danger.

Helen McIlroy made reference to an article in the Star newspaper, which included a statement by Councillor Terry Fox concerning the solution of using flexible paving which it was stated had helped to retain trees on 143 occasions. The Star had asked Streets Ahead how many trees had been saved by alternative methods and the answer was that the information was not held. She asked where Councillor Fox obtained this information; why it was withheld by Streets Ahead and whether a list of the 143 trees could be made available and if not, why not?

Councillor Julie Dore, the Leader of the Council, responded that regarding her comments on the Radio Sheffield programme, she also had a transcript. She was also not aware who the members of the Tree Panel were. As regards the independence and make-up of the Panel, Andy Buck was the Chair and there would also be a tree expert, a health and safety expert and a lay member. The Panel’s membership was to be announced next week. An inaugural meeting at which the Panel members were able to meet and greet each other had taken place.

The Council’s strategy for highways trees was (rather than being in a single bound document) within the highways contract. If a tree was categorised within one of the ‘six ds’ then it would be recommended to be felled. As a result of the campaign and other comments that had been received, it was decided to set up an Independent Panel who would consider trees in the 4 categories other than those that were dead or dangerous, which would be felled. This would come into effect in circumstances where 50 percent of people on a street affected by

potential tree felling decided to refer the matter to the Panel, which would provide a second opinion.

With regard to the engineering works which had resulted in retention of 143 trees, Councillor Dore stated that she could not provide an answer as to the exact location of the trees. There was a possibility that some trees could be saved, even if they fell within the six ds criteria. The option of flexible paving was one of 25 engineering options which could be used to retain trees.

Councillor Dore said that people were asking for trees to be retained and others were asking for trees to be removed and some such requests had been made via the City's Members of Parliament and local Councillors. The trees which had been retained had been as a result of minor cost effective measures.

The Panel would consider the trees, including visits to locations at which 50 percent of people on a particular street had requested a second opinion regarding trees to potentially be felled and would propose options for the Council with a view to potentially retaining the trees. However, if the cost of such measures to retain trees was high, the Council would make a decision as regards affordability.

Councillor Dore stated with reference to the statement from Councillor Fox quoted in the Star newspaper and concerning reports of campaigners having tried to stop felling teams from removing trees, that Councillor Fox would have made a statement based upon information that had been given to him. Councillor Dore stated that she would ask Councillor Fox about this matter when he returned.

4.1.3 Public Questions Concerning Mental Health and Learning Disabilities

Ivan Stark referred to the treatment of people with mental health conditions in Doncaster and expressed concern as to the conduct of local authorities and the legal system. He said that people needed to look at mistakes which had occurred and bring perpetrators of abuse to justice.

Adam Butcher referred to the independent review relating to Learning Disability and Mental Health at the Southern NHS Foundation Trust during April 2011 to March 2015. He asked what the Council was doing to make sure the same problem did not occur in Sheffield.

Councillor Mary Lea stated that this was a most important issue. The report of the independent review regarding the Southern NHS Foundation Trust and concerning unexplained deaths, contained a number of recommendations regarding failings and problems. These included the quality of investigations and reports, lack of leadership, the length of time taken to complete investigations, a failure to involve families and failure to implement recommendations.

This presented an opportunity to learn from the experience the Southern NHS Foundation Trust. The Council had met with the City's Clinical Commissioning Group and Health and Social Care Foundation Trust and a discussion would also take place at the next safeguarding meeting. The recommendations of the review into the Southern NHS Trust would be examined with a view to ascertaining how

Sheffield compared and how services might be improved. It was important to consider the extent to which people with mental health conditions or Learning Disabilities were valued and look at the culture of the appropriate organisations in this regard.

Councillor Lea said that she could not comment upon circumstances in Doncaster but in Sheffield, aspects of where services had failed were examined and the Council and other organisations wished to ensure that services were of the highest quality. Where abuse occurred, this needed to be reported and it would be investigated and referred to the Safeguarding team. Staff working with people who had mental health conditions or those with Learning Disabilities had also to understand their responsibilities. Any problems which were highlighted had to be investigated and the person affected should get proper redress.

4.1.4 Public Questions Concerning Devolution Consultation

Nigel Slack stated that the public consultation on the proposed Devolution deal for the City region was to end in 9 days' time. He said that despite repeated requests that the consultation be placed on the front page of the Council website, this had not happened. He asked whether this was because the Council did not feel the consultation was important enough or it was worried about a negative response.

He said that the consultation survey itself offered a space to express what were felt to be the benefits of the proposal but no space to comment on the drawbacks of the deal. He asked whether this was an oversight or a deliberate attempt to emphasise the positive over the negative.

Mr Slack referred to the Assembly North academic research project, headed by Professor Matt Flinders of Sheffield's Crick Centre. He said that the public in that exceptionally well informed and demographically balanced group, from across South Yorkshire, voted against accepting the deal as it was drafted. He said that since then, the Council's Senior Officer and some Councillors had been undermining the quality of that research, in defence of the devolution proposal. He asked if the current public consultation came out against the devolution proposal, how would the Council respond.

Mr Slack said that the consultation finished on the 15th January and the Council, meeting to make the decision on the proposal for Sheffield would, presumably, be the meeting on 3rd February. He asked when the results of the consultation would be available to Councillors and to the general public.

Councillor Julie Dore, the Leader of the Council, stated that the consultation was on the Council website and a link was also provided to the consultation survey. Councillor Dore stated that she believed that there was a place in the survey to enable people to make comments and people had informed her that they had done so.

As regards the Assembly North Research Project, Councillor Dore said that she was unsure as to whether Mr Slack was referring to the event held relating to that project that had been attended by invite only; or to the Overview and Scrutiny

Committee meeting held on the subject of devolution that had been held in public. She said that she believed no attempt had been made to undermine the Crick Centre project, to which the City Council had contributed.

The consultation concerning devolution ended on 15 January 2016 and it was proposed that the matter was considered by Council at its meeting on 3 February. However, the Administration would not propose that any proposal or deal was signed until the conditions that had been set were met. These conditions included the constitutional issue concerning the power held by the elected Mayor and the Combined Authority Members in any majority vote where the elected mayor had a right of veto, which the Administration had said that it could not support; and the potential amendment to legislation regarding the ability of district councils to join as full constituent members of the City Region. The matter would be brought to Council at the point at which the conditions were met. If the issues were not resolved by the time of February Council, the issue would not be considered at that time.

4.1.5 Public Question Concerning Housing

Nigel Slack commented that the news of the new Council housing being built in Sheffield was a welcome step and asked what will Council do to prevent this housing becoming subject to what he termed, the predations of the 'Right to Buy' scheme?

Councillor Jayne Dunn stated that the Council would look at potential solutions in relation to the Housing Bill so as to ensure that viability was built into the development of new housing. There was no precise detail at this point in time. However, when more detail was available, a policy could be developed. For example, it was not yet known what the Government classed as 'high value' housing. Councillor Dunn stated that social housing provision was very important.

4.1.6 Public Question Concerning Answers to Questions

Martin Brighton asked for the Chamber to be informed of what had been done by the Council about the issues raised in his questions at full Council last December and if nothing had been done, an explanation of why not.

Councillor Julie Dore, the Leader of the Council, responded that she had looked at the minutes of the previous Council meeting and she could not find a reference to an issue which might be outstanding from the responses given to Mr Brighton's questions and it wasn't clear to which question he had referred. She said that Councillor Mary Lea had given an extensive response regarding the prevention of winter deaths. If Mr Brighton wished to point out where action had not been taken by the Council, Councillor Dore asked that he inform the Secretariat accordingly.

4.1.7 Public Questions Concerning Fracking

Martin Brighton asked for the Council to state its position on fracking and whether the Council would have genuine and meaningful consultation with potentially affected citizens before making any decisions about individual fracking drills?

Councillor Julie Dore, the Leader of the Council, stated that the Administration of the Council was opposed to fracking and this would be subject to any further evidence that would cause it to change that position.

4.1.8 Public Questions Concerning Racism and Ethnicity

Martin Brighton asked that whilst in any democracy there is a tolerance for those with whose views we might not agree, where does this Council draw the line on racism? He asked, does this Council tolerate racism among the groups it supports and does this Council have any policy for Council officers when faced with racist individuals at Council events?

Mr Brighton also asked:

- 1 does this Council condone, at any level, the arbitrary ceding of advantage to any ethnic group above that of any other ethnic group?
- 2 Does this Council support any group that seeks to gain advantage of one ethnic group over any other ethnic group?

Councillor Sioned Mair Richards, the Acting Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods stated that she did not believe there should be any tolerance regarding racism and she did not expect the City Council to tolerate racism in respect of any groups or organisations which the Council supported. Councillor Richards said that she would expect Mr Brighton to contact her if there were any such examples of racism to report.

Councillor Richards stated that in circumstances when it was safe to do so, she would want people to challenge racism. However, if it someone did not believe it was safe to challenge behaviour, then they should withdraw from the situation and take the matter up afterwards. The Council would not condone the ceding of advantage to any ethnic group and did not support any groups that would cede advantage. However, if Mr Brighton was aware of an instance of such practice, Councillor Richards asked that he contact her.

4.1.9 Public Questions Concerning Community Volunteers

Martin Brighton asked, where this Council has been informed of unjustified sanction and prejudice placed upon community volunteers, and has even agreed that the reasons for the sanctions were unjustified, where is the justification for continuing the prejudice and sanction?

Councillor Julie Dore, the Leader of the Council, responded that the Council did not prejudice and/or apply unjustified sanctions to any community volunteers.

4.2 Petition

4.2.1 Petition Requiring Debate Requesting the Council to Open Empty Buildings as Winter Shelter for the Homeless

The Council received an electronic petition containing 6,865 signatures requesting the Council to open empty buildings as winter shelters for the homeless. The Council's Petitions Scheme required that any petition containing over 5,000 signatures would be the subject of debate at the Council meeting. The wording of the petition was as follows:-

"To: Sheffield City Council

Follow the lead of Ryan Giggs, Gary Neville and Manchester City Council and open empty buildings to our homeless this winter.

Why is this important?

For people in one of the wealthiest societies that has ever existed to be sleeping in the open in winter is inhumane. It's also inexcusable when we have so many empty buildings."

Representations on behalf of the petitioners were made by Chris Dunlop who informed the Council that he had begun the petition in connection to rough sleepers and as a member of the campaign group, 38 Degrees. A similar petition had been organised in Manchester and Manchester City Council had opened a disused library building in Hulme to be used for people who were rough sleepers. Other local authorities had been asked to do the same. Mr Dunlop explained that he had been surprised at the large number of signatures which the petition had attracted. On 5 November, the Sheffield Star had also published an article on the subject and Radio Sheffield also ran a piece, which he believed had increased the number of signatories. It was clearly something about which people were concerned.

Mr Dunlop said that he had received a prompt response to the issue from Councillor Jayne Dunn, the Cabinet Member for Housing which had said that the number of rough sleepers in Sheffield was relatively small, they were known to the authorities and agencies and the total number of people had declined and that he was not in a position to evaluate the response. However, he felt that in Sheffield there was more evidence of people who appeared to be rough sleepers.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.1 (b), the Cabinet Member for Housing responded to the petition, following which the Shadow Cabinet Member for Housing spoke on the matter.

Councillor Jayne Dunn, the Cabinet Member for Housing, thanked Mr Dunlop and the petitioners for bringing the matter to Council and for raising the issue of rough sleeping. She said that homelessness was something that was very close to her heart, and something that she had brought to Council on a previous occasion.

Councillor Dunn said that she had in the past been made homeless and referred to the fear and panic that she felt including that she might have lost her son and that people would judge her. She said that as a result of her experience, she had fundraised for homeless organisations and also raised the issue of homelessness.

As Cabinet Member, Councillor Dunn stated that she was in the position to influence change and implement policies to make sure that everything was being done to protect, support and advise people who were at risk of becoming

homeless or had become homeless.

Councillor Dunn referred to the impact of welfare reforms and to work which she was doing alongside the Cabinet Members for Neighbourhoods and Public Health and Equality and the relevant specialist teams concerning improvements to the City's approach.

Research had shown that prevention and intervention was the best way forward. Sheffield's Roundabout began a homeless prevention service in 2014, which had been very successful and Councillor Dunn said that she had met many of the young people there and had seen the difference this approach was making.

The Council had recently held an anti-begging campaign in the City, which was fronted by an ex street drinker, asking people not to buy people who were begging a sandwich or a hot drink or give them money, which might be difficult for people.

Organisations like the Archer Project and the Broomhall Breakfast could provide food and warm drinks and also help people receive help with such issues as mental and physical health issues and addiction and support and advice on applying for benefits and housing.

The Council also chaired a multi-agency group where each individual rough sleeper was discussed and an action plan put into place. The rough sleeping service through Turning Point, focused on securing permanent accommodation, and identifying and supporting people sleeping rough. The service also offered practical advice to homeless and vulnerable people and food, clothing, shower and laundry facilities as well as access to healthcare professionals.

Councillor Dunn referred to a report received about a man who just before Christmas had been found rough sleeping around Park Square Roundabout. The Council's team went out immediately and Turning Point found him and his dog somewhere to stay with the Salvation Army.

Councillor Dunn said that she had telephoned Mark, who reported the incident via a video on Facebook, to thank him. During the conversation it became apparent that he wasn't aware of how much Sheffield did to help those who were homeless and that he had made the same assumptions that many of us do. Mark was so inspired that he had asked to volunteer at one of the agencies.

Sheffield had seen a decline in rough sleepers in recent years and there were a number of mechanisms in place to identify people who found that they had to sleep in doorways and on the streets. There was a severe weather strategy when temperatures were predicted to fall below zero for 3 days or more and on the first day, facilities were opened to accommodate people.

Councillor Dunn stated that she had joined the rough sleeping team to see for herself how it worked and had been impressed by the team's knowledge, expertise and dedication. It was recognised that it was not enough just to put a roof over someone's head, but that relevant groups needed to be brought together so that they were not working in isolation.

Councillor Dunn said it was right that the petition had been brought to Council and that people are outraged by homelessness. She expressed a hope that people were reassured that Sheffield provided sustained professional support to help stop the repeat cycle of homelessness, and that there were sufficient strategies in place which did not necessitate opening up empty buildings.

Councillor Dunn paid tribute and thanked organisations such as the Archer Project, the Salvation Army, Harp, Turning Point and Roundabout and everyone who volunteers, fundraisers, and had signed the petition in order to ensure that homelessness and rough sleeping were treated seriously. She also invited the lead petitioner to come out with her and the rough sleeping team and provide comments on how the City could improve its approach.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Housing then spoke on the matter and Members of the City Council then debated the matters raised by the petition, as summarised below:

The charities and voluntary organisations that worked to help vulnerable people were to be thanked and congratulated. The cross-service approach was part of the solution and would include agencies such as the police, voluntary sector organisations and health services.

A lot of Members had been to organisations such as the Archer Project and had slept out to raise money. The Council had implemented changes, strengthened policy and made a difference. Roundabout included support for younger people aged 16 to 17 years who presented themselves and needed accommodation. In addition, no family presented as homeless was put into bed and breakfast accommodation. There was support available to rough sleepers from charities and voluntary and faith organisations. These included the Salvation Army, St Wilfrid's and the Archer Project. The reasons for rough sleeping were diverse and might include drugs or alcohol or family related matters.

It was important that the issue of rough sleeping was raised, particularly in a relatively wealthy society. In one experience sleeping out for charity and to increase awareness, even during the summer, it was evident that people experienced noise and felt vulnerable. People who were homeless might value themselves so little that they cease to believe in their own self-worth or felt that they were undeserving. The Archer Project helped people to build their confidence and restore self-worth. People may look back and realise how hard they had fallen, which might lead them to a breakdown. It was important that people became involved in the issue of homelessness through such organisations and helped to fundraise.

A national register would help to identify people who had become homeless and enable them to obtain services. The organisation, Shelter had produced a report on empty homes, which should be brought back into use as a statutory duty. There were increasing waiting lists for social housing and the receipts from right to buy were not reinvested into housing provision.

The identity of people in the City who were rough sleepers was known and action was taken by rough sleeper services. Assumptions may be made about the circumstances of individuals who were rough sleepers, for example that they were homeless, when that may not be the case. It was good to know that people did care as demonstrated by the petition. The Council and other agencies wished to work with and support people who had lost their homes. People faced a range of problems, including family circumstances, mental ill health, domestic abuse and drug and alcohol problems. Prevention was the main way to avoid homelessness and Housing Solutions and other organisations provided accommodation to help people to retain tenancies where they had challenging circumstances such as mental health problems.

Homelessness was a symptom of deeper problem and providing a home was sometimes not enough for people with complex needs, for example multiple debt, or if they had lost confidence and the ability to sustain a tenancy. It took time for people to regain confidence and work through such difficulties. In some cases, a property might be taken over by drug users and an individual may sleep rough just to get away from that situation. The path to enable people to sustain a stable home needed to be considered along with a strategy. Supported tenancies for example may help to support people by providing furniture and giving people less to worry about. The idea of a national register was potentially a good one, but would be impossible in practice. The current programme of welfare reform also had an adverse effect the situation as regards homelessness and rough sleepers.

It was suggested that the issues of homelessness and rough sleeping were referred to a scrutiny committee, which would increase Members' knowledge and understanding and also increase understanding of what the Council was doing in this regard and could also identify improvements. The petitioners might also be encouraged to continue their campaign and to direct those who had signed the petition to organisations which worked to stop rough sleeping.

Homelessness and rough sleeping involved different factors. Through organisations including the Archer Project and the Salvation Army, people could be helped to move out of the problems which had been overwhelming to them. The petition had raised awareness and understanding. A problem was that putting a roof over someone's head may not be a suitable or sustainable solution. The charity Stopgap provided emergency accommodation for rough sleepers especially during winter and had admitted people to short term accommodation.

Whilst the Council was able to make sure that people had warm accommodation during the winter, some people, for complex reasons, were difficult to accommodate. The Archer Project and the St Wilfrid's day project were able to help people. St Wilfrid's was fundraising to enable the development of a residential project to support people who were homeless and vulnerable. Sheffield should be proud of the fact that there are people in the City who give help to others.

The condition of homeless people or rough sleepers locally was a reflection of the national scene. The support was welcomed of organisations such as Ben's Centre which provided a day service to Sheffield's street drinkers and the police had been

supportive of the initiative. Some people had tragic lives and it was not always easy for others to be sympathetic to rough sleepers. The long term effect of the Government's social and housing policies remained to be seen.

Opening accommodation for people might not always be effective. The Council had a role in supporting the voluntary organisations that helped to provide support to people. It was necessary for support organisations to get to know people who might have become detached from society in some way. Improvements may be possible in the approach to dealing with the issue of rough sleepers and homelessness and the matter should be considered by a Scrutiny Committee.

The lead petitioner, Mr Dunlop, exercised a right of reply. He commented on the genuine expressions of concern and knowledge evident in the debate. He accepted that opening empty buildings may not be effective. However, he was pleased that the petition was evidence that people did care and said he would provide the details of relevant voluntary organisations to those who had signed the petition.

Councillor Jayne Dunn the Cabinet Member for Housing, responded to matters which were raised during the debate. She thanked Members for contributing to the debate and commented that she felt the Council had come together on this issue. She welcomed that awareness regarding the issue of homelessness had also been raised by the media. She said that she had participated in a sleep-out during the winter and had spoken with a young man who had said that he did not deserve to go home for Christmas. Organisations such as Roundabout helped to build people's self-esteem and it was also important that prevention and intervention strategies were in place.

The outcome of the debate on the petition was as follows:-

It was moved by Councillor Jayne Dunn, seconded by Councillor Mazher Iqbal, that this Council:-

- (a) welcomes the work taking place across the city to tackle homelessness, and the concerns of local people on this issue; and
- (b) understands that because local services are able to meet demand for homelessness services at present, there is no need to open up empty buildings for rough sleepers, but if this situation was to change in future the Council would consider all options, working alongside its partners, which could include opening empty buildings.

Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed, seconded by Councillor Colin Ross, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by the addition of the following paragraph (c):-

- (c) nevertheless, requests that a report on the issue of support for rough sleepers in the city be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee for consideration.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

It was then moved by Councillor Jack Clarkson, seconded by Councillor John Booker, as an amendment, that the Motion be amended by the deletion of Paragraph (b) and the substitution of a new paragraph (b) as follows:-

- (b) the relevant Scrutiny Committee should meet as a matter of urgency to consider the matters raised by the petition and that empty buildings for rough sleepers be made available at this time.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was negated.

The original Motion, as amended, was put as a Substantive Motion in the following form and carried:-

RESOLVED: That this Council (a) welcomes the work taking place across the city to tackle homelessness, and the concerns of local people on this issue;

- (b) understands that because local services are able to meet demand for homelessness services at present, there is no need to open up empty buildings for rough sleepers, but if this situation was to change in future the Council would consider all options, working alongside its partners, which could include opening empty buildings; and

- (c) nevertheless, requests that a report on the issue of support for rough sleepers in the city be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee for consideration.

5. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

5.1 Urgent Business

Councillor Ian Auckland asked questions relating to urgent business under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.6(ii), as follows:-

Is the Cabinet Member aware that a petition asking the Council, as charity trustee, not to proceed with the sale of Cobnar Cottage in Graves Park has attracted over 4000 signatures in just two days?

So as not to pre-empt a debate at Council on the petition, will she withdraw the cottage from auction sale which is due to take place on Tuesday 26 January?

Councillor Sioned Mair Richards, the Acting Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods responded to the questions. She stated that she was aware of the petition and its content and of the views of the Friends Group and others concerning Cobnar Cottage. The cottage was located outside of the boundary of Graves Park. Discussions concerning the cottage had taken place over two years and the

matter had been considered on several occasions by the Council's Cabinet and relevant Scrutiny Committee. The proceeds from the sale of the cottage would be invested in improvements to Graves Park.

The Council had consulted the Charity Commission, which supported the right of the Council to sell the property and reinvest the proceeds in the Park. A survey of users found that 84 percent of respondents supported the proposal to sell the cottage and to use the proceeds for the Park. This was an independent survey by Sheffield Hallam University recommended by the Charity Commission. It was not the case that the sale of Cobnar Cottage would lead to further sale of parkland, as had been claimed by the Friends Group.

Councillor Richards stated that she did not intend to stop the sale of Cobnar Cottage and what had been agreed with the Charity Commission. She re-stated that the money raised from the sale would be wholly invested in Graves Park.

(Notes: 1. Councillor Auckland raised a Point of Order in relation to the response from Councillor Richards and concerning a factual inaccuracy related to the physical boundaries of the Park.

2. The Chief Executive has since ruled that there was not a valid point of order for factual inaccuracy. The statement that the cottage was not within the Park boundary is accurate. However it is acknowledged that the Cottage is in fact within the defined area of the Graves Park trust).

5.2 South Yorkshire Joint Authorities

- 5.2.1 Councillor Colin Ross asked questions relating to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority. (a) He referred to the meeting of the Authority's Audit Committee at which a recommendation had been made concerning the term of office for chairs of the Authority's sub committees or boards. He asked why such a condition could not be applied to the Fire Authority as a whole. (b) Councillor Ross referred to the report concerning the review of overtime payments and actions of the Chair of the Fire Authority in relation to the overtime payments. He asked whether Councillor Richards would support a resolution calling for the resignation of the Chair of the Fire Authority.

Councillor Sioned Mair Richards, responded in her capacity as Chair of the Audit Committee of the South Yorkshire Fire Authority. She said that it was convention that the Chair of the Fire Authority was held by one of the four constituent South Yorkshire Authorities. The current Chair was a Barnsley Councillor. How this might change was a matter which would be discussed with the South Yorkshire Local Authorities.

She stated that Counsel's opinion was that the actions of the Chair were lawful. The amounts which had been paid in overtime were voluntarily being repaid by three of the four recipients, as had been requested by the Fire Authority's Audit Committee. As the payment of the overtime had been lawful, its repayment was a voluntary act.

- 5.2.2 Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed asked whether it was felt that the internal review of the matter of overtime payments by the Fire Authority was sufficient given that the Chair of the Fire Authority was a Barnsley Borough Councillor.

Councillor Sioned Mair Richards responded that the Internal Audit function was absolutely sound and was bound by the CIPFA and Internal Audit codes which were applicable to Internal Audit in Barnsley and elsewhere.

Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed asked whether, Councillor Richards, as Chair of the Audit Committee, had opportunity to ask questions of the Chair of the Authority and if other Councillors also had that opportunity.

Councillor Sioned Mair Richards responded that everyone had the opportunity to ask questions at the meeting of the Fire Authority. It was for other members to explain if they had not asked questions at the meeting.

- 5.2.3 Councillor Roger Davison asked when the matters relating to overtime payments to senior officers of the Fire Authority first came to the attention of the Fire Authority?

Councillor Sioned Mair Richards stated that the matter first came to the attention of other Members of the Fire Authority in August 2015. As Chair of the Authority's Audit Committee, she commissioned a report to look at the issue and this was a comprehensive and detailed report produced by Internal Audit in Barnsley. 19 recommendations had been made and the Audit Committee would work on each of them. The first of the recommendations concerned a review of decision making processes. It was not felt that the processes had not been sufficiently robust or transparent and the objective now was to have greater transparency and openness. The aim was to ensure that the previous process used regarding the overtime payments could not happen again and the recommendations would be enacted. Recommendations would be monitored as a standing item on Audit Committee agendas and working parties would be active in between Committee meetings.

There were no questions relating to the discharge of the functions of the South Yorkshire Joint Authority for Pensions under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.6(i).

6. REPRESENTATION, DELEGATED AUTHORITY AND RELATED ISSUES

RESOLVED: On Motion of Councillor Pat Midgley, seconded by Councillor Gill Furniss, that it is noted that the Senior Officer Employment Sub-Committee, at its meeting held on 25 th November 2015, appointed Greg Fell to the post of Director of Public Health, and that Mr. Fell will start in post on 22 nd February 2016.

7. SHEFFIELD'S ECONOMIC NARRATIVE AND HS2

The Council received a presentation from Simon Green, the Executive Director, Place Portfolio, entitled *Sheffield's Economic Narrative and HS2*.

Mr Green outlined the global trend towards people choosing to live and work in cities and explained that the Northern Triangle of Greater Manchester, Sheffield City Region and Leeds City Region could be the future economic core of what was referred to as the Northern Powerhouse. Sheffield was the main economic driver of the Sheffield City Region and, within the City Region, 70 thousand more jobs would need to be created to narrow the gap with other parts of the country. In Sheffield, the identified growth sectors (in terms of additional jobs) were: Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care Technologies, Financial, Professional and Business Services and Creative and Digital Industries.

Sheffield City Centre was essential to unlocking economic growth in the City Region and its future development would require integrated infrastructure to enable people to connect to the known key growth areas across the City Region, whether it was by metro, road or rail. The City Centre needed a transport infrastructure to take cognisance of skills, inward investment and business growth. The current infrastructure provision did not support the City Region's ambitions for growth and the plans for future rail services also fell short of the City Region's vision. This included the location of the HS2 (High Speed rail) station as well as proposals for the integration of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), Midland Mainline electrification and future services on the Hope Valley line.

Mr Green set out a comparison of the proposed location of the HS2 station and NPR at Meadowhall and the alternative scenario of locating the HS2 and NPR station in Sheffield City Centre, at Victoria. It was the case that only a City centre location could provide comprehensive City region connectivity and strategic national connectivity and would act as a catalyst, reinforcing and accelerating further economic growth.

In conclusion, Simon Green outlined the proposals for transport infrastructure solutions, which included commitment to a HS2 station located in Sheffield City Centre and NPR from Manchester to Leeds and Sheffield city centres.

Members of the Council asked questions and commented on the issues in the presentation and responses were given, as summarised below:-

There was a clear, evidence based rationale for locating the HS2 station in the City Centre, including supporting infrastructure for growth of the economic sectors as outlined in the presentation. How would this also deliver more for the City Region as a whole? This concerned the nature of employment which was concentrated around hubs and the ability to connect and interact with other hubs and bring about an expansion in high value employment, for example in professional and business services and which would not be brought about by locating the HS2 station in Meadowhall.

Centres of large cities had a driving economic effect which could not be replicated.

What more could be done to put a compelling case for the location of the HS2 station in Sheffield City Centre? There was a case to be made for Sheffield as the driver of economic growth in the City Region and where growth sectors would be located and growth would occur. Sheffield was also geographically central to a City Region, which included Chesterfield and Derbyshire Dales. If all of the local authorities in the City Region supported a HS2 station located in Sheffield City Centre, it would be most welcome. However, the fact that all of them did not was not sufficiently material to look at Meadowhall as a preferred location. The decision was one which needed to be properly based on business and economic factors.

Financial, digital and creative employment of high value was likely to occur in the City centre. Was the business community lobbying for a city Centre HS2 station? The success for the Sheffield Retail Quarter would also depend upon the growth of such employment sectors in the City centre. The Private sector had fully backed the position taken by the Council as regards the location of a HS2 station and they had accelerated their own lobbying of Government. The City's universities and other large employers and the Chamber of Commerce were also supportive. The Sheffield Retail Quarter was needed and was being worked upon. It was not dependent on HS2. However, if the HS2 station was located in the City Centre, it was beneficial for the feasibility of both the Sheffield Retail Quarter and subsequent retail or leisure developments.

A strong case had been made regarding the City centre location of the HS2 station and the Government would make a decision regarding both the station and Transport for the North. Could the main outputs of Transport for the North be outlined? The objective was to link city centres of Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds by rail with journey times of 30 minutes. Options included use of the Hope Valley line, the alignment of rail track with Hope Valley route or a tunnel under the Peak District. The latter was the preferred route as it was dedicated, non-stop and utilised some existing infrastructure.

Reference was made to possible options which included the Woodhead Tunnel and Glossop and it was confirmed that all options were being considered.

The universities were important and both were supportive of the Sheffield position and had been part of the lobbying of Government. It was crucial to the international position of the universities to have a city centre HS2 location.

Leeds had been successful in changing proposals in relation to the location of its HS2 station and there was good evidence in relation to Sheffield of politicians at both local and national level working together regarding the location of the HS2 station. The idea of a HS2 station hub at Victoria would also be beneficial to patronage at Doncaster Airport and the businesses located at the site of the former Sheffield Airport.

As regards the impact of austerity and potential benefits of investment in the City region, it would be better for people in the City Region in relation to employment if the Region was able to generate an additional £7.6 billion GVA (Gross Value Added).

In response to a question concerning rail freight, it was confirmed that freight was part of one of the Transport for the North work streams and it was recognised that connections to the ports was important, concentrating on where there would be added value.

Points were made in relation to the importance of activity in schools and colleges relating to manufacturing industry and initiatives including the University Technical Colleges. Skills were a key part of the proposed devolution deal. Comments were also made in relation to the contrasts in transport connectivity and journey times between cities in the south and north of England. Transport infrastructure, included the airport to facilitate international business and future transport infrastructure development in the City.

In response, Members were informed that there was disparity in both the transport spend per person and investment in transport infrastructure. The Crossrail project was perhaps an example of the scale and speed of investment in London and the South East. In the City Region, future development included the tram-train project linking Sheffield and Rotherham, which might be a model for future development of tram and train transportation and was potentially faster and less expensive to develop as it utilised existing rail track. It was noted that Leeds had been successful in lobbying Government regarding the location of its HS2 station.

The Council noted the information reported in relation to Sheffield's economic narrative and HS2 and thanked the Executive Director, Place Portfolio, for his presentation.

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