	Questions
	Public Questions Concerning the EIA report, Age UK at Hillsborough Park and John Lewis
	Nigel Slack asked the following three questions: 1. Will Council please send me the EIA report 916 regarding the new LACs and explain why this did not form part of the background papers? 2. It is always fun to see the rush of decisions being made by Council in advance of Purdah and it is interesting how many are 'good news' stories. The decision on Hillsborough Park is great news and yet we have other great organisations and buildings still awaiting proper lease arrangements. How did Age UK at Hillsborough Park manage to jump to the head of the queue? 3. With John Lewis no longer able to guarantee the future of the Sheffield store, what arrangements are in place for Council to reclaim the costs of their recent lease negotiations and have the funds for the refurbishment of the store been provided to John Lewis and if so, how will they be retrieved? Mr Slack expressed his sadness at the closing of Thorntons.
	Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Governance and Deputy Leader of the Council) echoed Mr Slack's sadness at the loss of Thornton's. He agreed to share the EIA report with Mr Slack, but stressed that this is a live document and may well change before it is completed.
	Councillor Mary Lea (Cabinet Member of Culture, Parks and Leisure) responded to question two. She agreed that this is a great project, and would benefit those with dementia or impacted by dementia and those who use Hillsborough Park. She said she was not aware of a queue for leases, and stated that this project was first proposed in 2017. She said there were various factors that influence when a lease is signed, including feasibility and sustainability.

	Councillor Mazher Iqbal (Cabinet Member for Business and Investment) stated that the closure of Thornton's was another loss for the High Street. He explained that high streets were changing before the pandemic, and unfortunately have continued to change due to the impact of COVID-19. Councillor Iqbal said that the Council will work with its partners to provide staff with as much support as possible. Councillor Iqbal stated that John Lewis had surrendered their lease in July 2020, which had a 42 year term remaining. He added that there was also a charge on the ground rent, which was nominal. The payment at that time was 3 million pounds, and following that the Council also entered into a 20 year model lease for the building. At that time, the rent was based on John Lewis' turnover. The Council was looking at refurbishing the building, and those refurbishment costs would have been released once the work had been undertaken. Councillor Iqbal directed Mr Slack to the agenda – specifically the Future High Street Fund and the Pound Park which is being consulted on. He added that there is a West Bar scheme of 150 million pounds. Councillor Iqbal stated that the Council continues to strive for a world-class city centre.
	<u>Public Question Concerning Local Area Committees</u>
	Vicky Seddon asked the following question: The intentions spelled out in the tabled proposals for a new variety of Area Committees (we have had them in different formulations in the past) are ambitious and commendable. Giving local communities a voice in the decisions on their localities is to be welcomed. But with the membership of these committees restricted to the elected councillors in the wards designated as part of that Area, and (to my understanding) no provision for co-options, how do the movers of the motion envisage those communities having any real decision-making input in the proposed Area Committees?
	Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Governance and Deputy Leader of the Council) thanked Ms Seddon and

	Mr Slack for their participation throughout this process. Councillor Fox stated that the Local Area Committees had been influenced by Sheffield residents throughout the process. He explained that democratically elected councillors will be sat on these committees as decision makers, however; he stated this would not take away from the power residents will have to shape and influence decisions.
	Councillor Bob Johnson (Leader of the Council) thanked Ms Seddon for her question and for her involvement in the development of LACs.
	<u>Public Questions Concerning Local Authority Committees</u>
	Mike Hodson asked the following questions of the Council: While welcoming this potentially ambitious and far-reaching proposal to enable the citizens of Sheffield to exercise more influence, more control and more scrutiny over local issues and decisions, I do wonder at the haste with which this scheme has been put together, and at the lack of some key elements needed to achieve this laudable ambition: in particular Where is the prior consultation and discussion with communities that was supposed to precede and enable this proposal to proceed? If a stronger local voice is a key aim and outcome, why are some key provisions apparently missing? Such as: • commitment to and provision for community representation in addition to that of local Councillors • provision for non-Councillor members to add items to the agenda for meetings • provision for non-Councillor members to request additional meetings • provision for measures to promote openness and transparency and access to information A recognition that these multi-ward Areas are over-large for effective community participation, and that the lack of effective access to these Area Committees will diminish the vital trust needed for the scheme to succeed?

	Councillor Bob Johnson (Leader of the Council) responded to question one, and stated that the Council has been working for some time to increase engagement with residents – including the Big City Conversation. He explained that residents expressed their want to play an increased role in local decisions, and the Local Area Committees are the principal way in which the Council aims to achieve this.
	Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Governance and Deputy Leader of the Council) responded to question two. He stated that there was currently a skeleton proposal for Local Area Committees, which will be built upon during tomorrow's Special Full Council meeting. Councillor Fox stated that the Council wants to include all residents and communities in this process.
	Councillor Bob Johnson (Leader of the Council) stated the committees have been designed to fulfil the minimum legal requirement for establishment of local decision making. Councillor Johnson explained the committees aim to work in a way which best suit different neighbourhoods.
	<u>Public Questions Concerning Council Meetings and Tree Felling</u>
	Russell Johnson asked the following questions:
	1. Will the Leader describe the steps being taken to: a) restore credibility to the Public Questions process at FC and Cabinet, in response to concerns about frequent non-answers and commitments to provide written answers that do not materialise or are meaningless? b) fulfil the promise regarding after-meeting PQ responses becoming part of the public record of the meeting in every case? 2. The alleged 'Broken Wrist' reported by SCC to have taken place during the defence of trees being felled under the Amey PFI. Having made inquiries to the Police and the Health & Safety

	Executive, and earlier Public Questions to SCC having received no proper answer, I now ask: a. Will the Council now admit that the Broken Wrist story originated as propaganda from within the Council partly as a means of securing further Police cooperation to assist Amey in tree removal. This after having 'thrown them [SYP] under a bus' (their words!) at the Rustlings Road debacle? b. Will the council now sincerely apologise for their wilful misleading of the public and Police in doing this, demonstrating the moral rectitude expected of political leaders? c. Furthermore, will the Council now disclose the source of other deliberate misinformation designed to cast peaceful protestors as criminals: namely the lies about the use of nails, and oil, etc, invented with the same intention. d. If, as many suspect, the source is SCC, would the Cabinet Member apologise on record for this behaviour that is clearly in contravention of the Nolan Principles, damaging to the reputation of the ruling Party and the integrity of our Governance. 3. The 'Archive', and The Independent Inquiry into the Tree Felling Fiasco: a) Is Cllr Jones aware that campaigners for truth, transparency and openness are understandably becoming rather, nay, exceedingly, sceptical about the purpose and intentions behind the much-delayed 'Repository'? b) Please would either the leader or Cllr Jones properly address the public clamour for an independent truth searching process around the disgraceful ecological assault on public assets in felling thousands of healthy mature trees.
	Councillor Bob Johnson (Leader of the Council) responded to question one, and stated that when meetings were held in public questions could be submitted up to the commencement of that meeting. He added that operating virtually had presented some challenges, and that in order to ensure as many questions as possible are responded to a deadline was necessary. Councillor Johnson stated he was told that there is one outstanding issue relating to cabinet, and the March minutes are yet to be published.

	Councillor Mark Jones (Cabinet Member for Environment, Streetscene and Climate Change) responded to Mr Johnson's additional questions. Councillor Jones stated that he recognised the historical conflicts over tree felling, and said he could not respond to historic allegations in this form as he did not have sufficient information around the allegations raised here. Councillor Jones said the Council had looked into the wrist injury, and he was not aware of any attempts to cover up information.
	Councillor Jones responded to question three, and stated that the aims of the Tree Dispute Archive are to gather together all relevant information, to catalogue this and to publish this information as part of the city's archive collection. He added that much of the information is already available to the public through answers to Freedom Of Information requests on the Council website; however, the Tree Dispute Archive aims to collate and index this information to make it easier for the public to access.
	Councillor Jones stated there were four stages in the Tree Dispute Archive programme, the first stage of which was gathering information, the second was cataloguing information, the third stage was publication of this information and the fourth was preserving the digital files for the long term. He stated there is a large amount of information, and added that four months have been set aside to carry out this work with completion due in July 2021. Councillor Jones explained that the date could change dependent on the amount of information; however, he added that the Council would work hard to try to avoid a delay and if there was a delay this would be communicated. Councillor Jones said he believed the Chief Archivist may be able to meet campaigners and outline the project and he would pass on this request to the Chief Archivist's service. He stated that the process is complex and resource intensive, and that the Council apologises to those who feel there is a delay in this project being complete.
	Councillor Jones responded to question three, and stated he was unsure if the Council is in a position to move forward on this in a meaningful manner. He added that he hoped the archive would go some way to resolving these issues.

	Public Question Concerning SCC v Fairhall et al
	Justin Buxton asked the question: "With reference to paragraph 22c of SCC's Statement of Case to High Court, July 2017 (D92LS739) SCC v Fairhall et al: 'Further, the direct action has the effect of:' SCC elaborates and claims "significant consequential implications for the **cost**, phasing and delivery of those necessary works - if the trees cannot be **removed** as the first stage of the highway maintenance works then the remainder of the works cannot be carried out;" Please specify and detail what the 'costs' stated were, specify how they would have been incurred and identify the contractual obligations in terms of liability of SCC to bear these specific costs. Please could you specify and detail how these alleged 'costs' quoted have been managed since the halting of the original tree felling programme pursuant to the subsequent new excusing **cause** applied to the Streetsahead contract. Furthermore, please explain and detail why the excusing cause was not implemented in preference to applying for a high court injunction, threatening residents with huge damages, and consequentially apply to court for committal to prison of a number of residents. All at considerable expense to SCC, both monetarily and reputationally?" a) Can you please tell me how many managers and workers employed by the new service are JNC-recognised professional youth workers? (I notice that the advert for a new Head of Youth Services does not require applicants to have a professional youth work qualification) b) Sheffield Futures was run by a multi-agency Board, in bringing services in-house how have the benefits of that been built in or replicated? c) what are the mechanisms through which community-led youth service providers can be part of actively shaping and contributing to a better city youth work strategy and delivery of services?
	Councillor Mark Jones (Cabinet Member for Environment, Streetscene and Climate Change) stated that this was a complicated request with numerous questions. He stated that any issues relating to the court case

	were put by the Council and answered by the Complainant in the live evidence. Councillor Jones said that it was not his place to question the Judge's decision. Councillor Jones said that the implications of the excusing cause in order to facilitate the change in the service delivery to a retain and phase approach introduced a change in the obligations of each party under the contract. He added that this change was introduced at the same time as a number of other negotiated changes, which were approved under the ICMD on the 31st January 2020. He said that the overall effect of these changes was a saving to the Council, and any impact of the introduction of the excusing cause is contained within the adjustable unitary charge payment. Councillor Jones said that the Council pay a single charge and all work is covered by that payment, and therefore individual elements are difficult to isolate.
	<u>Public Questions Concerning the Local Area Committees:</u>
	Ruth Hubbard asked the following questions: I don't know many people in Sheffield who are against meaningful participatory local democracy. Certainly I'm deeply committed to it, however challenging, because it's vital to so much about the situation we find ourselves in. The people who have been against it have been you, the political leadership. I welcome any change from that position. But it was the longstanding position of the last Leader who told me repeatedly that people were not interested and it was down to you to make the decisions. And that's how Sheffield has been run for many years and how things have played out in communities across the city. I've lived a few places (and worked in and with a few councils) and I've never seen anything like it. Obviously it has done real and lasting damage and continues to do so. Pretty much everyone – at best – is sceptical, and that is your legacy and there are lots of consequences. Pretty much no one believes that you are interested in genuinely participatory mechanisms (or that you can even think any differently) above controlling the city, "managing" the electorate, and protecting your position for as long as possible, even with your miniscule mandate. (And that's not to say that at the same time you haven't wanted to try and implement policies that you think are right.) There's time for nothing here, but there's layer upon layer of it - but at the extreme it appears you have somehow moved

	in a few short steps from wanting to imprison people for exercising a bit of community power, to “empowering communities”. 1. So firstly, I’ve heard and see no narrative about where we are and how we got here. Why do you think there is any basis for anyone to even begin to trust that you are at all interested in “empowering communities”? Where is the starting point that acknowledges or diagnoses and brings some understanding or analysis, and that resolves outstanding issues? This set of reports has been out a few days and it appears almost no one has seen or discussed or helped shape what is quite a detailed set of proposals on structures, scope, terms of ref, limits and boundaries, processes, workstreams and so on – and with further details to be defined by you. It appears out of nowhere as the usual top-down ‘decision’ of the “strong leader” with a blueprint ready to be imposed and rammed through tomorrow in an Emergency Council Meeting, yet it is about community empowerment. 2. Are you not setting this up to fail at the first hurdle with no clarifications, buy-in, consultation and enhancements? Doesn’t it entirely negate what you say you want to do if it is intended simply to be imposed? Is it not an imperative to consult (and so that the Gunning Principles can also be properly applied) if you are genuinely committed to community empowerment? What outside (and council staff) expertise have you consulted – there are many different approaches and models for this kind of thing to underpin and provide a deeper understanding and rationale. 3. Thirdly, there is a clear sense in the proposals that with any move to locality based committees that this might be a way of further distancing citizens, communities and stakeholders from *actual* decision-making. Can you give a commitment that the proposals will not be used to e.g. remove public questions in main council decision-making bodies and that direct stakeholder engagement in scrutiny (in whatever form that happens) will not be even further minimised? 4. Thirdly, are we now to understand the position of this Cabinet is that you support some kind of *participation* in local decision-making (albeit imposed top-down and defined/controlled by you) but do not support people having *actual representation* (via all councillors) in council decision-making?

	Councillor Bob Johnson (Leader of the Council) responded to Ms Hubbard's questions. He said that he had spoken with Ms Hubbard about this issue previously. Councillor Johnson stated that Local Area Committees had been consulted on over 12 to 18 months, including through the Big City Conversation during which a large number of people from a range and depth of Sheffield's communities asked for more localised decision making. He explained this is the Council's first step, and that the existing governance will allow the Council to work with and be part of Sheffield's communities.
	Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Governance and Deputy Leader of the Council) stated that there was cross party participation on the overview and scrutiny of the Local Area Committees. He stated that there is an opportunity for residents to shape and steer Local Area Committees, and this commitment would be outlined in tomorrow's Special Council meeting. Councillor Fox thanked Ms Hubbard and other members of the public for their input into this process.
	The Council noted the information reported and thanked all of the presenters for attending the meeting and providing their updates and for answering Members' questions.