

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 21ST DECEMBER, 2017

A MEETING of the COUNCIL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE on THURSDAY, 21ST DECEMBER, 2017, at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor George Derx
Vice-Chair - Councillor Majid Khan
Mayor - Ros Jones
Deputy Mayor - Councillor Glyn Jones

Councillors Nick Allen, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachael Blake, Nigel Cannings, Phil Cole, John Cooke, Mick Cooper, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Linda Curran, Susan Durant, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, Martin Greenhalgh, Pat Haith, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Richard A Jones, Kenneth Keegan, Jane Kidd, Nikki McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Andy Pickering, Cynthia Ransome, Andrea Robinson, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Derek Smith, Sue Wilkinson, Jonathan Wood and Paul Wray.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bev Chapman, John Gilliver, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Eva Hughes, Tina Reid and Austen White.

47 Recent Deaths Of Councillor Tony Corden, Rodney Bickerstaffe, Honorary Freeman Of The Borough And Former Councillor Vernon John Wain

Prior to the commencement of formal business, Elected Members, Officers and members of the public, observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect and remembrance in relation to the recent deaths of Councillor Tony Corden who passed away on the 21st November, 2017, Rodney Bickerstaffe, an Honorary Freeman of the Borough, who passed away on the 3rd October, 2017 and former Councillor Vernon John Wain, who passed away on the 10th November, 2017.

48 Declarations of Interest, if any

Councillor David Hughes declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item No.10 (F), by virtue of being a member of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel.

49 Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21st September, 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday, 21st September, 2017, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved, as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

50 Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 9th November, 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on Thursday, 9th November, 2017, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved, as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the inclusion of the following paragraph after the first paragraph on page A.3 of Minute No. 46, to read as follows:-

Councillor R. Allan Jones asked the Deputy Mayor whether there was any legal impediment to the coming together of Combined Authorities in the future and as such work as a single statutory body? The Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services gave an undertaking to provide Councillor Jones with a response.

51 To receive any announcements from the Chair of Council, the Mayor, Members of the Cabinet or the Head of Paid Service

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, made the following announcement:-

“I would like to make an announcement regarding regional Devolution.

In November, Doncaster Council agreed to hold a Community Poll to ask our residents their views on regional Devolution, specifically whether they would prefer Doncaster to be part of a wider Yorkshire Devolution agreement or the current Sheffield City Region proposals.

The consultation exercise ended yesterday and today I can announce the outcome of the Poll.

Last year when the Sheffield City Region undertook its consultation on Devolution, just 67 residents in Doncaster responded and only 561 across the whole of South Yorkshire.

In contrast, I am pleased to be able to inform Council that 45,470 residents in Doncaster have voted in our Community Poll. The results are as follows:

- Wider Yorkshire – 38,551
- Sheffield City Region – 6,685
- Invalid ballot papers – 234

This result represents an overwhelming majority in favour of wider Yorkshire Devolution, which received 85% of all valid votes cast.

The overall turnout was 20.1%, meaning that more people in Doncaster voted in our Devolution consultation, than in any of the three South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner elections which have taken place.

The Community Poll therefore represents a very significant consultation exercise, engaging tens of thousands of residents who would not otherwise have been involved in the Devolution debate. In addition, it has significantly raised awareness of regional Devolution amongst our wider population, with more than 225,000 people receiving information direct to their door.

The outcome of the poll also reflects the views expressed by our local business community. Colleagues will be aware that in a recent survey undertaken by Doncaster Chamber of Commerce, 70% of local businesses said they would prefer Doncaster to be part of a wider Yorkshire Devolution.

This position is also supported by the Doncaster Chamber of Commerce, our MPs and colleagues in this Chamber.

Doncaster's position on Devolution is therefore settled.

It is the will of the people, our business community and our elected politicians that Doncaster should be part of a wider Yorkshire Devolution agreement. We will therefore respect this position and would encourage others to do the same.

We have always said that Devolution is a vitally important issue, which will impact our residents, our businesses and our Borough for the next 30 years.

From the outset, both Doncaster and Barnsley have been clear that we are willing to consider interim solutions for the Sheffield City Region. However, we are also now clear about the ultimate destination, which is for Doncaster to be part of a wider Yorkshire Devolution agreement based on the widest possible geography.

We will therefore engage constructively with Government and colleagues from across Yorkshire on this basis and seek to deliver a solution which meets these requirements, and respects the will of the people of Doncaster. Thank you."

The Chief Executive, Jo Miller, made the following announcement:-

"This is Simon Wiles last full Council meeting. He has been a heroic Director of Corporate Resources and I know is valued by all Members across this Chamber. He has been a massive part of where Doncaster is today. He has been a huge support to me personally and a great member of the team. I know that all Members in the Chamber would want to join me in wishing him well. Simon, you have been a complete Donny Star and we wish you all the best in your retirement."

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, also extended the Labour Party's thanks to Simon for all the work he has done in some very difficult times and his help to drive the Borough Forward.

52 Questions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13

There were no questions from the public received for this meeting.

53 Mayor's Draft Budget Proposals 2018/19 - 2020/21

The Council considered a report which set out the Mayor's Budget Plan for 2018/19 to 2020/21, including the draft budget proposals to close the budget gap, in preparation for approval at Council on the 5th March, 2018.

In presenting her revenue budget proposals, Mayor Ros Jones stated that it was another prudent three year financial plan aligned to the Doncaster Growing Together Strategy approved by Council, which focused on protecting and improving front line services, and investing in Doncaster's future.

The Mayor emphasised that in the current climate, this had been 'no easy task'. As everyone in the Chamber was aware, the Mayor highlighted that the Council continued to face a difficult financial challenge as further cuts had left this Council with another significant budget gap.

The Mayor explained that over the next three years, the Council needed to meet a further budget gap of £43million. This was on top of the £224million of ongoing savings the Council had already had to find in its annual revenue budget since the Government austerity measures began.

The Mayor stated that it would take the total annual budget gap the Council had to bridge to £267million, since Government austerity measures took hold in 2010/11.

In light of the economic challenges the Council continued to face, the Mayor stated that it did not get any easier to prepare a budget which invested in the future, protected the most vulnerable and maintained the services that mattered most to the Borough's residents.

However, the Mayor pointed out that this was the Council's key priority and she believed that the Council had achieved this as set out in her draft budget proposals.

The budget proposals therefore continued to deliver the Mayor's priority and the priority of the Labour Administration to:-

- Increase jobs, apprenticeships, inward investment and grow the Borough's economy, including more well paid, high skilled jobs that local people could access;
- Deliver more new homes that meet the needs of everyone;
- Developing the Borough's Town Centres and the arts, culture and leisure offer;
- Increasing physical activity, including through cycling, to improve the Borough's population health and well-being;
- Raise education standards and bring the education system and business community together, to give young people more opportunities to flourish;
- Deliver vital services for children and vulnerable residents, joining up health and social care, focusing on prevention and support, and transforming services in Adult Services; and
- Supporting and working with communities, to help keep them clean, green and safe.

The Mayor highlighted the great progress that had been made in Doncaster in recent years. In the post-recession period since 2009, the latest figures showed that Doncaster had experienced the highest rate of economic growth in South Yorkshire; at almost 21%, it was the third highest rate of growth in the whole of Yorkshire. Since 1997, the Authority's economy had more than doubled in size, rising from the 9th largest in Yorkshire to the 7th largest by GVA (Gross Value Added), overtaking York and Hull in the process.

The Mayor reported that the Borough had seen some of its highest levels of employment, with thousands of new jobs and apprenticeships created, supported by the Council. Housebuilding had reached a 15 year high, with new private sector homes, Council houses, bungalows for older people and new supported living units to help people live independently.

The Mayor added that education results were improving and earlier this year, the new National College for High Speed Rail opened, extending the Borough's Higher Education provision and that these were just some of the Borough's many recent successes. However, the Mayor stated that the Council must look to the future and there was plenty to look forward to in 2018, including:-

- The return of the 'Tour De Yorkshire';
- Work commencing on the new £14m Central Library, Museum, Art Gallery and Archives facility;
- More new house building across the Borough, including new Council housing and the opening of the new Extra Care facility in Thorne;
- The completion of Phase 2 of the Great Yorkshire Way, taking the motorway link road right up to the front door of Doncaster Sheffield Airport; and
- The development of the Railway Station 'City Gateway' and markets regeneration schemes.

The Mayor further reported that the Council would be progressing the development of a new Communication and Interaction School for children with autism, which was set to open in 2019.

Furthermore, the Council was stepping in where the market could not deliver, with the Herten Triangle project also expected to take shape next year. It would develop new business and leisure opportunities at the Lakeside, creating jobs and generating business rates to help offset the impact of the Government cuts.

The Mayor commented that in these difficult times, the Council must live within its means, so to meet its goals, the Council must continue to modernise and improve its services, and deliver value for money. The Council would therefore continue to develop online services for residents, and its transformation programme to support more people to live in their own homes for longer. The Mayor believed that this was the right thing to do and also meant there was less need for long term or traditional care which saved money.

The Mayor pledged to support residents with the cost of living where possible, and commented that this year, the Council launched its new energy company which puts people before profits. She explained that whilst there was a limit to what the Council could do to tackle increasing costs for residents, in this budget, the Council had sought to minimise the increase in fees and charges, and aimed to keep them in line with inflation.

The Mayor stated that she was extremely disappointed at the Government's complete failure to deal with the national funding problems facing Local Authorities, particularly with regard to Adult Social Care. The Government's answer was to underfund vital services and yet increase the financial burden on local taxpayers, which the Mayor felt was wrong. This placed a strain on those who could least afford it, through a regressive tax system that benefited wealthy areas over places like Doncaster and South Yorkshire.

The Mayor commented that unfortunately, Government policy on Local Authority funding meant that Council Tax rises were inevitable in order to sustain vital services and further evidence had emerged this week of that approach, as the Government increased the Council Tax limits by a further 1%. The Mayor emphasised that the Council Tax increases would not bridge the funding gap. In Doncaster, like elsewhere, people would see their Council Tax rise as the Government squeeze on hard working families continued, yet the budget for vital public services would still reduce.

The Mayor explained that through careful planning and a prudent approach over the last four years, the Council had managed to limit the proposed rise in Doncaster next year to 3.99%, which was well below the maximum 6% that the Government was now allowing.

The Mayor commented that Council Tax in Doncaster would remain one of the lowest in the Country amongst Metropolitan and Unitary authorities, but she was deeply disappointed that the Prime Minister had forced these costs on to people who could least afford them.

The Mayor emphasised that the Council's only course of action was to grow its way out of the situation, commenting that the good news was that in Doncaster, the Council was delivering on that agenda and its approach was paying dividends for Doncaster.

The Mayor thanked all staff in particular, Faye Tyas, Head of Financial Management and Steve Mawson, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director of Finance, and partners and colleagues in the Chamber, who had helped the Council to deliver its successes, in often difficult circumstances.

The Mayor stated that this proposal continued the Council's prudent and effective, but ambitious approach to delivering services and supporting the Borough.

The Mayor said that she would also listen to any budget proposals brought forward by colleagues.

To conclude, the Mayor asked that if colleagues wished to bring forward any alternative proposals, Members do so at an early stage so that they could be discussed in detail in advance of the budget meeting in March, 2018.

RESOLVED that the Mayor's Budget Plan for 2018/19 to 2020/21, including the draft budget proposals to close the budget gap in preparation for approval at Council on 5th March, 2018, be noted.

Questions by Elected Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 15.2 and 15.3

A. Questions on Notice

No questions on notice had been received for this meeting.

B. Questions Without Notice

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.2, the Chair of Council sought questions from Elected Members during Question Time:-

A. Questions to Ros Jones, Mayor of Doncaster

Q. Councillor Andy Pickering asked the following question:-

“I have just read the news that Barnsley has also voted a similar way to Doncaster over the Devolution issue. I have just had it pointed out to me that the Secretary of State has apparently offered a deal, which has been reported in the Sheffield Star. It said that for this deal to proceed, the way forward is for us to join the Sheffield City Region and then the way out of it would be to have the Elected Mayor give their permission. Can I ask Mayor Jones to look into this because that seems to be a very worrying aspect that the democracy that we have just seen in action, could be totally undermined by one person?”

A. The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, gave the following response:-

“I welcome that the Secretary of State is looking to come forward with some form of compromise, but let us be clear, we have got our true mandate from our residents and that is the position that we will be ultimately pursuing.”

B. Questions to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Equalities

Q. Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the following question:-

“My question relates to Equalities. Eighteen months ago, yourself and another Cabinet Member were approached regarding a level crossing at Melton Road, Sprotbrough. It was for the elderly and also for people that have got impaired sight. Eighteen months ago, the problem was money as you well know. The money was raised by 106 money and the Parish Council. Eighteen months later, we are still waiting for this crossing. The goal posts keep moving. We keep getting various excuses for various things. This is in sharp contrast to a fast food outlet that was granted planning permission in November and which is up and running, a car park, a drive through and they are trading. So I see a certain amount of slowness that has been happening with this?”

A. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, gave the following response:-

“Thank you for your question Councillor Ransome. I presume you are talking about a pedestrian crossing, not a level crossing, as there are some significant differences between the two. I have just consulted my colleague and he has said that it is going to happen. I don’t know when, but it is going to happen.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. “The goalposts keep moving. They tell me one month, then they tell me another month, then they tell me another month. I need to know when?”

A. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones gave the following response:-

“Yes, we will get the Officer to give you a date. I don’t know that date off the top of my head, because it is not specifically in my Portfolio, but I do appreciate where you are coming from.”

C. Questions to Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure and Culture

Q. Councillor Pat Haith asked the following question:-

“Homelessness is clearly an issue nationally that the Tory Government is doing nothing to tackle. Would you please tell us what Doncaster Council is doing to provide a solution to what is often a complex issue?”

A. Councillor Nigel Ball, gave the following response:-

“Thank you Councillor Haith. I think you are right, we have noted at this time that effectively, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee has recently stated that Homelessness within this country is a national crisis. The Department of Communities and Local Government has addressed this by saying that the Government’s agenda in terms of reducing homelessness, has been unacceptably complacent. The report goes on to say that the number of people sleeping rough in Britain has increased by 134% by 2010 and that there has been a 60% rise in the number of households in temporary accommodation since, 2010, as well. The list of data and statistics goes on.

But it’s fair to say that at any one time, there is more than 9,000 sleeping rough on the streets of this country; 78 households, including 120,000 children, are homeless or living in temporary accommodation. More than 300,000 people in Britain, equivalent to one in every 200, are officially recorded as homeless or living in inadequate homes, according to figures released by the charity Shelter. We are in a position at the moment where we have got effectively, a million people using foodbanks, compared to 40,000 in 2010. And 30% of Britain’s children are now classed as poor, of whom two-thirds are from working families.

So the national backdrop of austerity for 7 years has caused this disaster, this atmosphere of despair in all of our towns, cities and villages. And let's be clear about it, it's been mentioned earlier on in terms of the Council cuts, that these Local Authorities, much similar to what Doncaster has faced. We are in a position now where we are cutting deeper and deeper and working people and non-working people are having to pay the brunt of austerity. And it's about tax cuts for the rich. It's about obviously dealing with the systems that are in place; they are foisted down on us by Central Government, that we are having to manage locally.

So, in terms of Doncaster, what is it doing? Well, earlier this year, we launched the Complex Lives Team, who is working with a number of individuals around the Borough, but also predominantly within the Town Centre. At the moment, they are working with 114 individuals. Out of those 114 people, effectively 27 are classed as homeless and 15 are rough sleeping. These people, who have got complex lives, have got certain barriers that do not allow them to move on either into tenancies, into work and training and lead what we would class as a normal life and that's why they need that specialist support. Far from being punitive, it's about giving these people support, giving them a chance in life and actually moving on.

I commend the Council and the work that the Council's teams have done to pull this forward. Because in actual fact, this is a national disgrace. It's not just a scandal, it's a national crisis. That's what we have got. So as we move towards Christmas, and obviously looking at 21st Century Britain, it appears to be a cold harsh place, where certain individuals and certain sections of society, have bailed out and doled out money, but other sections, ordinary working class people, are left basically to fester. This is basically 7 years of austerity. Where is that good society that we all strive for? Where are we moving towards? And if I have just got one Christmas wish, is that obviously Theresa May over the Christmas period, will offer some reflection and think about a strategy, in terms of tackling this in the New Year, but I am very doubtful."

Q. Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the following question:-

"Councillor Ball, I read with interest about the zero tolerance on litter and also the many letters, weekly in the Free Press. 3 questions. You publicised huge increases on litter fines. What have you compared your increases to; are these fines delivered by a private company; and what is the cost to the Council for this Service?"

A. Councillor Nigel Ball, gave the following response:-

"It is not my Portfolio, so unfortunately, I can't answer it."

D. Questions to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services

There were no questions put to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services.

E. Questions to Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Q. Councillor Derek Smith asked the following question:-

“My question relates to Social Care budgets. My question is in two parts. Can you tell me what measures are being taken to ensure that proposed cuts to the Adult Social Care budget do not transfer additional pressures on to our already overstretched local NHS services? And the second part is, on the subject of residential care working age. Can we be assured that alternative provision for more efficient personalised services, respects individual choice, relatives views and provides independent advocacy where it is needed? Moving home away from longstanding carers and friendships is a life changing event, which necessitates the use of advocates. My experience previously in this type of situation, and I worry that it may be repeated, is that financial pressures often trump individual needs.”

A. Councillor Rachael Blake gave the following response:-

“Thank you for your question Councillor Smith. I don’t think any of us can underestimate the scale of the cuts and the funding gap that both the NHS and Adults Services are facing, and I think that it would be a good opportunity to place on record our thanks to all our Adult Social Care staff for the fantastic job they do throughout the year, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. And I extend that thanks to our NHS colleagues as well. I think what we are doing in Doncaster, is that we recognise that to overcome that funding gap, we actually have to work together.

So in Doncaster, we have the two NHS Trusts; we have the Council and together we have put forward the ‘Place Plan’. The ‘Place Plan’ has focussed areas, and one of those focussed areas is ensuring that we promote health and wellbeing more. If we promote health and wellbeing more, which is one of the transformational aims of Adults Services, then people should use NHS Services much less than they do at the moment. I am sure that many colleagues across the Chamber are involved in those health and wellbeing services and supporting them. I know that there are Members here that are actually providing those services. We all have to do that in partnership to make sure that those health and wellbeing services are as robust as possible, so we can make sure that people aren’t having to use the NHS and that we do keep people as independent as possible, for as long as they want to and for as long as they want to stay in their own homes.

The second question is around moving home. I believe moving home for any of us is incredibly stressful, but for people who have complex needs, it is even more so. So I think it is important that we follow the guidance that’s there and I can provide that reassurance, having had these discussions on a weekly basis with staff that we are following things in the Care Act 2014.

We are using the Mental Capacity Act to ensure that people who have capacity are supported to make decisions. Those people that don't have capacity, have the opportunity to have that independent advocacy. And in Doncaster, we do have 'Voiceability', which is an independent advocacy service, which is funded by the Council and is available for those people that don't have capacity to make their own decisions. I will be happy to, if it is a huge change that is being made to bring those changes and an update back to full Council, so that everyone is aware of what's happening for those people with complex lives."

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Derek Smith asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. "Thank you for your response. I fear we will see perhaps more people moving from good quality public sector provision to independent and private sector provision because it is cheaper. And if this is the case, I fail to see how it's in the best interests of an individual or in Doncaster's best interests. Would you say then my fear is justified?"

A. Councillor Rachael Blake gave the following response:-

"How I would respond to that is by saying that those best interests assessments are about finding the best place for people who have lived in these situations; the best place to live. When we talk about transformation and we talk about making sure that people are living as independently as possible, I don't think any of us should underestimate that there is a cost to that. It isn't about the cheapest option. This is about the best option for those people.

We have within Doncaster Council's Adults Services, an excellent commissioning service that works with people, whether they are in the private sector or whether they are in the public sector. Obviously, these homes would have to comply with CCQ regulations and we have a robust Contract Monitoring Team who would monitor the situation to make sure that services that are provided, are the ones that actually meet people's needs. We have some excellent examples of where people have moved in to more supported living that has been transformational for them. That is not going to be available for everybody because it is not in their best interests to do that and what we have to offer as Adult Social Care, whether providing or actually commissioning those services, is that we offer that continuum of services so that everybody whether they have mild needs or extremely complex needs, does actually get services that they need so that they achieve their aspirations."

F. Questions to Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools

Q. Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the following question:-

“Councillor Fennelly, this is an update on one of my pet subjects, ‘Education’. I have done a lot of research around this and what really makes me wonder is that you are writing to the Academies, the Regional Schools Director. Exactly how much power do we have with this as far as schools finishing at 2.30pm?”

A. Councillor Nuala Fennelly gave the following response:-

“Thank you Councillor Ransome. To be fair we don’t have very much. We have a mechanism where we speak with the Regional Director. Damian Allen does have meetings with him. What we have to do is to work together opposed to the Academies working how they work and how we work as a Local Authority. But the issue is that technically as an Academy, we don’t have any influence, but the enrichment that they have in the afternoons that they don’t attend school, is what they’re supposed to do.

I assume that the Regional Schools Director has to check or one of his staff has to check that the work that they are doing is the enrichment work, or whether they are getting half a day off school. So I am like you, I don’t think they should get half a day off school and I said that at a previous Council meeting as well. But, they are allowed to do it as long as they attend school for the amount of hours per year that they have to attend. Some schools I have found since you asked the last question start at 8.30 am instead of 8:50 am. So they are making their hours for when they have their enrichment, even though technically they don’t have to. But, they are spending enough time in school, but like you, I think that these things that they are doing on an afternoon when they are not in school, should be coordinated by the schools, instead of the students leaving school.

I will speak to the Regional Director through Damian and we will ask that question; are they checking why they haven’t had their enrichment. It could be that they are having music classes or it could be that they are doing sport. As a lot of you in here do know, the older ones of us, Wednesday afternoon used to be PE afternoon. So, I think that the point of it all is, does the Regional Directors Team know why they are having the afternoon off and what are they doing in that time.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. “So, educationalists are paid large sums of money to educate our children. Who exactly holds these to account because we seem to do great strides in education, as we want them to do, but they tell us that we are under performing; we have got lower performing schools in the country and all the rest of it. Who is holding these people to account?”

A. Councillor Nuala Fennelly gave the following response:-

“The Director for Education holds schools to account through the Regional Director and then we are held to account through the Directorate for Education in Doncaster for our local education schools. The LA schools belong to us and the Academies; it’s the DfE that runs those schools. They do it through the Secretary of State. So when we write to the DfE, that would go to the Secretary of State, which was the way that the Trust was set up and that is the way it works. So, we would write to the DfE if we don’t like the answer we get from Regional Academies. That is the system. It does go to the DfE, but they do make the decisions on what happens to education.

And, I agree with you that we do pay these people a lot of money, but we don’t seem to be getting anywhere with the hours or the terms, because the terms are getting shorter. Academies can change the actual terms of the school year. We are not going to get any further until we get in touch with the DfE and actually say that as a Council, if everyone would agree to that, we are not happy with it and that they are not being held to account for the days. Ok, I will do that.”

G. Questions to Councillor Chris McGuinness, Cabinet Member for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment

Q. Councillor Ian Pearson asked the following question:-

“My question is that recently, Council agreed that people who had their wheelie bins stolen would have to pay £22 to have their wheelie bin replaced. As it has just been mentioned, a lot of people who are moved in to new premises, arrived to find that none of their wheelie bins exist, because they have already been stolen before they have moved in; that can land them with a cost of £66 straight off, when they are in dire need and have no furniture. Perhaps the policy of replacing stolen wheelie bins could be reviewed for people who have previously been homeless, are not faced with a bill for £66, when it was not their wheelie bin to look after previously. Thank you?”

A. Councillor Chris McGuinness gave the following response:-

“It was made clear in the policy that where it was a new property, or it was a private landlord, then the landlord or the developer would pay for the bins. There are other cases and there is one at the moment that I am aware of that the Council is looking at. The Council will in certain circumstances, look at each case on its own particular merit, but the general policy is, if you lose your bin, you pay for the replacement which is done elsewhere; it depends on the circumstances.”

Q. Councillor Jonathan Wood asked the following question:-

“Councillor McGuinness, you have just said circumstances. Can you just define some of those circumstances. Does a wheelie bin being stolen count; does a wheelie bin being burnt out count; if a bin is damaged by one of the lorries or is damaged by a neighbour? Could you be a bit more specific about when the Council will replace them or not?”

A. Councillor McGuinness gave the following response:-

“I think what I clearly said there was that it depends on the circumstances. We can invent circumstances all afternoon, can't we. But, if there is one incident where there is apparently a number of youths who have been collecting them and burning bins, that's when we will look at it separately. But, if someone puts the bin out and it goes missing, then generally speaking they will be expected to pay for a replacement. If it becomes a persistent problem, then the Neighbourhood Teams will look at it. But, the policy has only just come in so it is not likely to be reviewed straight away.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Jonathan Wood asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. “I am just wondering in terms of Cllr McGuinness saying that we can ask questions all day. Well of course we could. But, the reality is, that the bin isn't actually owned by the householder. My understanding is that the bin is owned by the Local Authority. Therefore, the questions you talk about, we could talk about all day. You know that the direct question here is that if the Council has had a piece of property stolen, why are we charging individuals for them. In the case where you made a statement where we have got a group of youths stealing them and burning them; whether it's been stolen and burnt, or whether it has been stolen, actually makes no difference to the householder. The point is, in some of our most challenged neighbourhoods, if we are going to do it by income deprivation or by other; let's just see a set of rules, because it is not good enough to say that the Council will look at individual circumstances. The Council will always look at individual circumstances because we know that.

The question is, what do the vast majority of people that pay their taxes and contribute to this Authority deserve; they would like to know what the rules are. So, it's very easy for you to wash it away and say that we can ask questions all day, but it's not about a single question; it's about the fact that at the end of the day, they don't own the bin. They are not buying it, so can you be a little bit more specific please?”

A. Councillor McGuinness gave the following response:-

“I will tell you what, we will set up a meeting with the Officers and we will spend some time going through the policy, which you could have done at any point during the last 18 months.”

Q. Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the following question:-

“Councillor McGuinness, I understand that you are the 'litter man'. I have to say this because this Portfolio has had so many owners; it's just incredible. So, is it your Portfolio before I start again? I read with interest about your zero tolerance on litter and also how many fines you are issuing. I also watch in the Free Press, the many letters complaining about litter and the complaints that I get in my Ward about litter. I have 3 questions. You publicised huge increases on litter fines. What are you comparing these figures to; are these fines delivered by a private

company; and what is the cost to the Council for this private company's service?"

A. Councillor Chris McGuinness gave the following response:-

"It's compared to previous fines in previous years. The answer to question two is that some of them; because the Council still has its own function, but there is an external contractor. And the details and the breakdown of items; I can forward to you in due course. Those are the ones that I haven't got with me."

Q. Councillor Kevin Rodgers asked the following question:-

"Councillor McGuinness, are you pleased that in the New Year, they will be continuing, 'This is My Doncaster' and doing local litter picks to help people and communities to clear up their environments and live in a more pleasant area?"

A. Councillor McGuinness gave the following response:-

"I certainly am and they will continue in the New Year, and when they are in your Ward, you should get prior notice from your Neighbourhood Team."

H. Questions to Councillor Bill Mordue, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Economic Development

There were no questions put to Councillor Bill Mordue, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Economic Development.

I. Questions to Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services

There were no questions put to Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services.

J. Questions to Councillor Austen White, Chair of the Audit Committee

In the absence of Councillor Austen White, Chair of the Audit Committee, the Chair of Council informed Members that any questions for Councillor White should be submitted to the Chair, in writing, after the meeting and a response would be provided.

K. Questions to Councillor Phil Cole, Chair of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee

There were no questions put to Councillor Phil Cole, Chair of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee.

L. Questions to Councillor Rachael Blake, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board

There were no questions put to Councillor Rachael Blake, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

M. Questions to Councillor Kevin Rodgers, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

There were no questions put to Councillor Kevin Rodgers, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

55 To receive the minutes of the following Joint Authorities

In noting the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Sheffield City Region (SCR) Combined Authority on 18th September, 2017, where the powers of a future SCR Mayor was discussed, Councillor Phil Cole commended Mayor Ros Jones and Councillor Sir Steve Houghton who had voted against some of the proposals put forward which had subsequently fallen at the meeting. Councillor Cole noted that at that meeting and the minutes of 30th October, a majority of Councillors that were represented at those meetings had no vote. He highlighted to Members that legally, they had no status and had no voting powers within the SCR. Therefore, there were only four Council Leaders who had 'any say'.

In view of the fragmentation of the SCR in the last six months and now with the overwhelming mandate from both Barnsley and Doncaster voters for a Yorkshire Wide Devolution process, Councillor Cole asked Mayor Ros Jones whether she would consider writing to the Minister asking him to scrap the scheduled elections for a South Yorkshire Mayor, which Councillor Cole believed was a pointless and futile exercise, given the overwhelming support from Authorities for a Yorkshire Wide Devolution deal.

Mayor Ros Jones referred to a question asked by an Elected Member earlier in the meeting and stated that she would welcome a letter from the Secretary of State. She added that the Council would want to meet with the Secretary of State to take forward the Council's mandate; the ultimate aim was to be part of the widest possible Sheffield Devolution deal. The Mayor asked everyone in the Chamber to work together to bring this about. However, she pointed out that she did not believe an open forum was the place for having a debate on what happened which would 'tie the Council's hands'. The Mayor reiterated that the Council now needed to work with the Secretary of State to bring about the Council's ultimate aim which was for the widest possible Devolution deal for Doncaster.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the following Joint Authorities, be noted:-

- A. Sheffield City Region Combined Authority held on 11th and 18th September, and 30th October, 2017.
- B. Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership Board held on 11th September, 2017.

- C. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 18th September and 16th October, 2017.
- D. Sheffield City Region Combined Authority/South Yorkshire Pensions Authority Joint Local Pension Board held on 5th October, 2017.
- E. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority held on 5th October, 2017.
- F. South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel held on 29th September and 9th November, 2017.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____