

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of the City of Sheffield held on Wednesday 7 October 2020, at 2.00 pm, as a remote meeting in accordance with the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, and pursuant to notice duly given and Summonses duly served.

### PRESENT

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

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

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mazher Iqbal, Sioned-Mair Richards, Peter Rippon and Paul Wood.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

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

- 3.1 The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) invited one member of the public to present a petition, and four members of the public to ask questions, which they had submitted prior to the published deadline for submission of petitions and questions. There had been an additional question received after the submission deadline from a member of the public, and the Lord Mayor stated that the matter raised in the question was being addressed by the relevant Cabinet Member separately to this meeting.

**3.2 Petitions**

**3.2.1 Petition Regarding Disruption to Residents by Visitors to the Mosque at Osgathorpe Road and Barnsley Road**

The Council received a petition containing 22 signatures, requesting action with regard to disruption being caused to residents by visitors to the mosque at 2 Osgathorpe Road and 306 Barnsley Road.

Representations on behalf of the petitioners were made by Sofeena Aslam who informed the Council that she was speaking on behalf of residents who lived in the vicinity of the mosque at 2 Osgathorpe Road and 306 Barnsley Road.

She explained that whilst there had been objections, planning permission had been granted for the erection of a purpose-built mosque on the site of the existing mosque and subject to various conditions. The petition informed the Council of the disruption to local people and concerns relating to when a new mosque was built.

She informed the Council that the mosque was located in a cul de sac in a residential area. People living in the area had experienced nuisance and unacceptable behaviour from people attending the mosque. This included people attending the mosque several times a day from early morning to late at night. There were large gatherings outside the mosque and there was noise disturbance from people banging car doors and talking loudly outside in groups early in the morning and late at night. Vehicles were parked on double yellow lines and in the middle of the road and at the end of the cul de sac, which obstructed entrances to driveways

Sofeena Aslam said that the mosque was a place of worship and a multi-use building at which various activities took place and there was concern that matters would worsen when the new mosque was built and operational. The petitioners asked for the Council to act before the new mosque was built and to enable people to have a normal life in future.

She said that in particular, the Council was asked to instruct Council officers to meet with the petitioners to agree a plan to address the disruption that people experienced. This might include additional parking restrictions such as a residents' parking scheme; effective enforcement measures; to ensure that Council officers were proactive in relation to the conditions imposed when the planning application for the new mosque was granted and specifically, condition 14 relating to a Management Plan which was to include a scheme for managing the maximum number of people using the building at one time. The Council was requested to give full and proper consideration to these concerns and ensure that the necessary action was taken to resolve them. She said that these concerns had been raised on many occasions and it was expected that a full impact assessment would have taken place as part of the planning application and before the application was granted.

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

Councillor Johnson thanked the petitioners for bringing this matter to Council. He said that illegal and inconsiderate parking caused frustration and also safety concerns in many parts of the city. He said that he had raised the concerns outlined by the petitioners with the Parking Services team and had asked them to include that location as part of an enhanced enforcement.

He explained that the Council was investigating a three-year programme of area wide parking controls at key locations and where residents and businesses were adversely affected as a result of long stay commuter parking. This would provide some priority for residents and businesses and their visitors. However, such controlled parking zones were normally introduced in the areas of greatest pressure around the city centre and the three year programme concentrated on those areas adjacent to the city centre, behind the Railway Station at Park Hill and Kelham Island and Neepsend. Nonetheless, the Council's Transport team would also review parking practices close to Osgathorpe Road and consider whether there were additional restrictions that might be put in place to try and alleviate the problems there. Officers would be asked to go to the site and to investigate the matters raised and to increase enforcement.

### 3.3 **Public Questions**

#### 3.3.1 **Public Question Concerning a Crossing on Station Road, Halfway**

Kurtis Crossland stated that he had presented a petition in February 2020 for a crossing on Station Road in Halfway. He said that he had now heard that a crossing would be built, although he said that he was concerned that he had not

been informed of the outcome as the lead petitioner. He asked for an assurance that a crossing would be built; when the plans would be drawn up; and when was it expected that a crossing would be in place.

Councillor Bob Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Development, stated that the Council had managed to identify a local fund to enable the crossing to be built and the work would be delivered hopefully in line with other work which was taking place at the school. He said that he had visited the school last year and the matters raised in the petition had also been brought to his attention both by the local councillor and local MP.

### 3.3.2 Public Question Concerning Cleaning in Flats

Kurtis Crossland asked what the cleaning schedule was for communal areas in Council properties such as stairwells in flats; had this been increased due to Coronavirus; when was the last time the flats on Halfway Gardens were cleaned and could it be confirmed that there would be proactive cleaning of areas in properties?

The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) informed Council that Councillor Paul Wood, the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety, was absent due to illness and therefore a written response would be provided to Mr Crossland's questions and which would be published on the Council's website.

### 3.3.3 Public Questions Concerning Issues in Lowedges, Batemoor and Jordanthorpe

Sophie Thornton asked questions concerning several issues in the areas of Lowedges, Batemoor and Jordanthorpe.

First, she asked when the Council would clear fly-tipping which had been left in empty garages behind 51 Gervase Avenue, Lowedges and when unsafe structure garages due for demolition on Lowedges Place would be taken down.

Secondly, she asked what the schedule was for when a council property window was broken; and how long did it take from boarding-up the window to fixing it?

She said that in Lowedges, Batemoor and Jordanthorpe, there were many windows which were waiting to be fixed months after being reported. She asked whether the Council would address the properties that had windows boarded up, cutting off natural light and affecting residents' mental health, as a matter of priority.

Thirdly, Sophie Thornton asked a question as to the average time for the Council's housing repairs service to resolve fire safety repairs and how many had not been resolved within 30 days.

The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) informed Council that Councillor Paul Wood, the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety,

was absent due to illness and therefore a written response would be provided to Sophie Thornton's questions and which would be published on the Council's website.

### 3.3.4 Public Questions Concerning Coronavirus, Universities and Young People

Nigel Slack referred to work by universities in the USA in relation to the idea of 'superspreaders' of Covid-19 and to evidence that those most likely to be superspreaders were children and young adults.

He stated that the Government, the City Council and both Universities had failed the residents by following economic based government guidelines, despite warnings that the return to school and university was not safe. He said it was also clear that the measures put in place prior to students returning had been insufficient and the number of outbreaks in schools and universities continued to rise and affected the rate of infection in the city and its more vulnerable population.

He said that the local rate appeared to be in excess of 280 per 100,000 population and commented on the number of cases at the universities.

Mr Slack also commented upon the role of universities and accommodation providers as being complicit in this situation, and also the media and others in making young people believe they were invulnerable to the pandemic. He referred to the effect of the lockdown on the mental health of young people and to the potential effect on them if they believed they were responsible for the death of a family member.

He asked the following questions:

1. Would the Council demand an apology from the universities for putting money before student safety?
2. Would the Council demand accommodation providers ensure student safety was prioritised and support for those in lockdown delivered at their own cost?
3. Would the Council reconsider the advice received from the Government about the safety of continued school attendance, in light of the latest scientific evidence, and move quickly to mitigate the impact on pupils, teachers and the wider community?
4. How would the Council respond to the latest report from the US Centre for Disease Control that the virus appeared to be transmittable through aerosol spray spread in the air?

Councillor Jackie Drayton, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the lead Member for Public Health, responded to the questions. She thanked Mr Slack for his questions and said that people were all very concerned about what was happening in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic and she said that the

points he had raised were very important. She explained that the Director of Public Health was to provide an update in relation to the Coronavirus to the Council at this meeting.

She said that decisions were made nationally about children going back to school and also in relation to students going to university and businesses being open. The Council wanted to keep everybody as safe as possible and keep the most vulnerable safe. It also wanted to make sure that the City and businesses and economy were open and to make sure they could keep going.

Councillor Drayton said that she would provide a written answer in relation to Mr Slack's questions and she said the points he had raised were very valid and there was some big thinking to do going forward.

### 3.3.5 Public Questions Concerning Coronavirus and the Economy

Nigel Slack commented upon the impact of Covid-19 on the economy and to a recent announcement of the likely closing of cinemas around the country, which was of concern as it suggested the footfall for retailers and cultural venues was very significantly below previous levels.

He commented that businesses were using the pandemic as an excuse to restructure their businesses and to shed employees or locations and which may become more prevalent as the furlough scheme ended. He said that whilst neo-liberal economics might demand that this was the right thing to do, it was not however the moral thing to do in the midst of an international crisis.

Mr Slack asked if the Council would therefore review its economic plan for the city, to dial back the chase for big corporate names that may come to Sheffield if enough incentives were offered but might withdraw when the situation became tough?

The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) informed Council that Councillor Mazher Iqbal, the Cabinet Member for Business and Investment, was absent due to illness and therefore a written response would be provided to Mr Slack's questions and which would be published on the Council's website.

### 3.3.6 Public Question Concerning Proposals for New Road from Park Square to Granville Square

Graham Wroe made reference to the Draft Development Framework, within which there were plans to build a new dual carriageway from Park Square to Granville Square, behind the Station through Sheaf Valley Park. He commented upon the potential effect of the proposal, including in relation to noise and air pollution, the effect on walking routes, the loss of green space and in respect of the Amphitheatre. He said that a petition was recently launched concerning the proposal.

He stated that a Council serious about the climate emergency would not be considering such a proposal and commented in relation to a need for

improvements to the public transport system to encourage drivers not to use their cars.

Mr Wroe asked the following questions:

1. What alternative plans were being considered?
2. Where could these plans be viewed?
3. How could citizens influence this decision?
4. Please, give a commitment not to build a new dual carriageway today.

The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) informed the Council that Councillor Mazher Iqbal, the Cabinet Member for Business and Investment, was absent due to illness and therefore a written response would be provided to Mr Wroe's questions and which would be published on the Council's website.

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

- 4.1 RESOLVED: On the Motion of Councillor Dianne Hurst, seconded by Councillor Sue Auckland, that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 4 (Suspension and Amendment of Council Procedure Rules) and 11 (Motions which may be moved without notice), Council Procedure Rule 16.7 be suspended to remove the 30 minute time limit for the Members' questions item at this meeting, and a new time limit of 60 minutes be set instead.

#### 4.2 Urgent Business

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

#### 4.3 Written Questions

A schedule of questions to Cabinet Members, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16, and which contained written answers, was circulated. Supplementary questions, under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.4, were asked and were answered by the appropriate Cabinet Members.

#### 4.4 South Yorkshire Joint Authorities

There were no questions relating to the discharge of the functions of the South Yorkshire Joint Authorities for Fire and Rescue or Pensions, under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.6(i).

**5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING**

- 5.1 RESOLVED: On the Motion of Councillor Dianne Hurst, seconded by Councillor Andy Bainbridge, that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 be approved as a true and accurate record.

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

- 6.1 It was formally moved by Councillor Dianne Hurst, and formally seconded by Councillor Sue Auckland, that:-

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

Corporate Members Group - Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to replace Councillor Simon Clement-Jones; Councillors Alison Teal and Martin Phipps to be appointed to the Group

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

Poors Land (Ecclesall Bierlow Charity) - Mr. Mike Waters to fill a vacancy

Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust - Council of Governors - Councillor Steve Ayris to serve a further term of office ending 04/07/2023

- (c) it be noted that the Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority has replaced its previous five thematic boards, with four new boards, and representatives be appointed to serve on those four new boards as follows:-

Business Recovery and Growth Board - Councillor Mazher Iqbal; Councillor Julie Dore (Reserve Member)

Education, Skills and Employability Board - Councillor Abtisam Mohamed; Councillor Julie Dore (Reserve Member)

Housing and Infrastructure Board - Councillor Bob Johnson; Reserve Member to be appointed)  
*(Councillor Julie Dore is chair of the Board)*

Transport and the Environment Board - Councillor Bob Johnson; Councillor Abdul Khayum (Reserve Member)

- 6.2 Whereupon, it was formally moved by Councillor Ruth Mersereau, and formally seconded by Councillor Peter Garbutt, as an amendment, that the Motion be



amended by the deletion of paragraph (c) and the addition of a new paragraph (c) as follows:-

- (c) some positions on the new boards of the Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority be made available for opposition members so as to reflect the make-up of the Council; and that a further report from officers on the correct requirements for political balance be provided at the next meeting.

6.3 After contributions from three other Members, the amendment moved by Councillor Ruth Mersereau was put to the vote and was negated.

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

For the amendment (34) - The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Gail Smith) and Councillors Simon Clement-Jones, Richard Shaw, Bob McCann, Angela Argenzio, Kaltum Rivers, Douglas Johnson, Ruth Mersereau, Martin Phipps, Tim Huggan, Mohammed Mahroof, Joe Otten, Colin Ross, Martin Smith, Vic Bowden, Roger Davison, Barbara Masters, Shaffaq Mohammed, Sue Alston, Andrew Sangar, Cliff Woodcraft, Paul Turpin, Ian Auckland, Sue Auckland, Steve Ayriss, Kevin Oxley, Peter Garbutt, Alison Teal, David Baker, Penny Baker, Vickie Priestley, Jack Clarkson, Alan Hooper and Mike Levery.

Against the amendment (38) - The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) and Councillors Chris Rosling-Josephs, Sophie Wilson, Denise Fox, Karen McGowan, Jackie Drayton, Talib Hussain, Mark Jones, Anne Murphy, Mary Lea, Zahira Naz, Andy Bainbridge, Abdul Khayum, Alan Law, Abtisam Mohamed, Lewis Dagnall, Cate McDonald, Bob Johnson, George Lindars-Hammond, Josie Paszek, Terry Fox, Julie Dore, Ben Miskell, Jack Scott, Mike Drabble, Dianne Hurst, Dawn Dale, Peter Price, Garry Weatherall, Mike Chaplin, Tony Damms, Jayne Dunn, Julie Grocutt, Ben Curran, Neale Gibson, Adam Hurst, Mick Rooney and Jackie Satur.

Abstained from voting on the amendment (0) - Nil

6.4 The original Motion was then put to the vote in the following form and carried:-

RESOLVED: That	
(a) approval be given to the following change to the memberships of Committees, Boards, etc.:-	
Corporate Members Group	- Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to replace Councillor Simon Clement-Jones; Councillors Alison Teal and Martin Phipps to be appointed to the Group
(b) representatives be appointed to serve on other bodies as follows:-	
Poors Land (Ecclesall Bierlow Charity)	- Mr. Mike Waters to fill a vacancy
Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust - Council of Governors	- Councillor Steve Ayris to serve a further term of office ending 04/07/2023
(c) it be noted that the Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority has replaced its previous five thematic boards, with four new boards, and representatives be appointed to serve on those four new boards as follows:-	
Business Recovery and Growth Board	- Councillor Mazher Iqbal; Councillor Julie Dore (Reserve Member)
Education, Skills and Employability Board	- Councillor Abtisam Mohamed; Councillor Julie Dore (Reserve Member)
Housing and Infrastructure Board <i>(Councillor Julie Dore is chair of the Board)</i>	- Councillor Bob Johnson; Reserve Member to be appointed)
Transport and the Environment Board	- Councillor Bob Johnson; Councillor Abdul Khayum (Reserve Member)

6.4.1 (NOTE: Councillors Angela Argenzio, Kaltum Rivers, Douglas Johnson, Ruth Mersereau, Martin Phipps, Paul Turpin, Peter Garbutt and Alison Teal voted for paragraphs (a) and (b) and against paragraph (c) of the Motion, and asked for this to be recorded.)

**7. INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS FOR UNDERTAKING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

7.1 On the motion of Councillor Julie Dore, seconded by Councillor Penny Baker, and with contributions from three other Members, all expressing thanks to Charlie Adan (Interim Chief Executive) for her service to the City Council, it was:-

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) places on record its thanks for the service provided to the Council by Charlie Adan in the role of Interim Chief Executive during such a challenging time, and extends to her its best wishes for the future;
- (b) notes the interim arrangements put in place to cover the Chief Executive's responsibilities and provide strategic leadership for the Authority during the three month period from 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021, as described in the report now submitted;
- (c) designates the Executive Director, People Services, as the Council's Head of Paid Service, and approves a change to the list of Statutory/Proper Officers, as set out in Part 7 (Management Structure and Statutory/Proper Officers) of the Council's Constitution, to reflect this re-designation;
- (d) notes that the changes to the Proper Officer designations within Part 7 of the Constitution, approved by the Council on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019, upon the appointment of the Interim Chief Executive, are to remain in force, but that further changes are expected to be made once the new Chief Executive is in post; and
- (e) notes that all references to the Chief Executive in the Constitution are to be read as referring to the Executive Director, People Services, or the Executive Director, Resources, in their capacities as covering those responsibilities.

**8. FORMAT OF FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS IN 2020/21**

8.1 It was moved by Councillor Julie Dore, and seconded by Councillor Dianne Hurst, that approval be given to the recommendations in the report of the Director of Legal and Governance now submitted, regarding the format of the meeting of the Council meetings to be held on Wednesdays, 4<sup>th</sup> November and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.

8.2 Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed, seconded by Councillor Penny Baker, as an amendment, that the recommendations in the report of the Director of Legal and Governance in relation to the format of the Council meetings on 4<sup>th</sup> November and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021, be approved with the following changes:-

1. the deletion in paragraph 1 of all of the words after the words “Agree that the ordinary meetings of the Council to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> November and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021, will include Public Questions and Petitions, and Members Questions”, and the addition of the following words at the end of that paragraph as follows:-

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

2. the deletion of paragraph 2.

8.3 It was then moved by Councillor Paul Turpin, seconded by Councillor Angela Argenzio, as an amendment, that the recommendations in the report of the Director of Legal and Governance in relation to the format of the Council meetings on 4<sup>th</sup> November and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021, be approved with the following changes:-

1. the deletion in paragraph 1 of all of the words after the words “Agree that the ordinary meetings of the Council to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> November and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021, will include Public Questions and Petitions, and Members Questions”;

2. the addition of new paragraphs 2 and 3 as follows:-

2. agrees that the time limit for Members’ Questions at those meetings be extended to a period of up to one hour to allow for scrutiny of the Executive; and
3. believes that debate is vital for democracy and accountability and therefore agrees to include at least one Notice of Motion on topical local issues from each group at each of those Council meetings.

3. the deletion of the original paragraph 2.

8.4 After contributions from five other Members, and following a right of reply from Councillor Julie Dore, the amendment moved by Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed was put to the vote and was negated.

8.5 The amendment moved by Councillor Paul Turpin was then put to the vote and was also negated.

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

RESOLVED: That:-

- (a) it be agreed that the ordinary meetings of the Council to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> November and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 will include Public Questions and Petitions, and Members Questions, but that Notices of Motion are not to be a feature of those meetings and that, instead, an update will be provided to Council on Covid-related topical

subjects; and

- (b) in order to implement the changes proposed in paragraph (a) above, approval be given to the temporary revision to the Council Procedure Rules within Part 4 of the Constitution, as set out in the report, which (via suspension of Council Procedure Rule 4.1) is to apply for those three ordinary meetings.

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

- 9.1 Greg Fell, Director of Public Health, provided an update on the latest position in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Following the presentation there was an opportunity for Members of the Council to ask questions.
- 9.2 He outlined what could be ascertained about the Coronavirus from the epidemiology, key messages and areas of concern and the response arrangements that were in place to manage the pandemic from a public health perspective, together with core messages.
- 9.3 With regards information from the weekly surveillance report as published by Public Health England, this showed that the weekly rate of Covid-19 cases was increasing and the position was changing quickly. In Sheffield up to 3 October, the positivity rate was 327 per 100,000 population. The most significant growth was in the 18-24 age band and this was a national pattern. There was concern that Covid-19 cases were beginning to increase in older age groups and which were at greater risk of a much more severe illness than was generally the case for young people, notwithstanding the effect on some younger individuals such as long-Covid.
- 9.4 Whilst there had been a growth in cases across the city, there was faster growth in more deprived communities, which may be because of types of employment and travel patterns. Growth was principally in household clusters and was generally more diffuse across the city and increasing in number. The most opportunities to slow the spread of the virus related to household transmission. Ethnicity had also substantially shifted from South Asian communities in the East of Sheffield and was now largely representative of the city population. Mr Fell pointed out that this was an incredibly infectious and dangerous respiratory virus and not something that could be stopped.
- 9.5 There was probably no single cause or explanatory reason for the trend of increased cases in young people but it might include people returning to normal behaviours, the return of people from holiday and returning university students and other events such as house parties.
- 9.6 In relation to access to testing, the national and capacity problems were not quite such as they had been some weeks previously, but it was still a problem and one that had ramifications for the isolation of those with symptoms and the test and contact tracing that followed, together with the results which were the key metric for the epidemiology.

- 9.7 It was unlikely that cases would be contained within young age groups and cases were beginning to move to older age groups. There was a sustained increase in related hospital activity and Covid-19 related deaths following a long period of having none.
- 9.8 Mr Fell said that in relation to the response, the existing plan was being intensified although the strategy remained fundamentally the same. The Covid-19 prevention and management board owned the strategy, which was essentially to minimise harm, both direct harm of the virus and the indirect social and economic harm of measures to control the virus, and aimed to keep people safe; protecting the vulnerable; reopen Sheffield and follow government guidance. There was also an operational plan which was implemented by a programme board.
- 9.9 He explained that at this time, Sheffield was in the enhanced support category and had been invited to set out what support it would like from the Government. It was a difficult balance to protect the vulnerable from the harm of the virus and from the social and economic harm of measures to control the spread of the virus. It was thought that the best way to protect the vulnerable was to minimise the spread of the virus and to focus upon behaviours and clear messaging and a consensus and a consent based approach. Efforts were being intensified in relation to prevention, management of individual outbreaks, communications, contact tracing, enforcement and supporting isolation.
- 9.10 Consideration was being given to the management of upcoming events, such as Halloween. More effective contact tracing was needed and, whilst it was working, it needed to work better. The Government would decide whether it changed its view of the region and as to whether further measures such as lockdown would be applied. There was also a need to focus on basic behaviours and consistency. Thought would also need to be given to adaption in the long term and taking into account that it would be some time before there was vaccination available in sufficient numbers and that issues relating to long term immunity were not yet known.
- 9.11 He said that the Council was asking the Government for clarity about support for the response after March 2021, localised contact tracing and in relation to support for isolation and economic support.
- 9.12 Mr Fell said that the things that would have most impact included prevention; a consistent push on people getting tested even if symptoms were mild; minimising testing delay; optimising testing and tracing coverage and speed; and optimising isolation.
- 9.13 He outlined communications activity which was about cutting through the confusion; collective responsibility; changing behaviours; and consistency and stability.
- 9.14 He acknowledged that the autumn would be difficult and that it was important to continue with the programme and to build consensus and trust and said that

much of the level of compliance was down to people's choices and their understanding and consent.

- 9.15 Mr Fell stated that other measures may be imposed by the Government, although the exact nature and timing of those was not possible to predict. The city would continue to seek a balance between protecting people from the virus and the economic impact of control measures. He said that the basics of the city's approach remained important in supporting individuals and the economy.
- 9.16 He reaffirmed the core messages of the guidance which were constant and were; if you have a symptom get a test, stay at home and isolate; and give details of your contacts; seek help and advice; bubbles and social contact i.e. the more contact people had, the more opportunities there were for the virus to spread into new groups; stay home if identified as a contact; wash your hands; keep your distance and wear face coverings where recommended.
- 9.17 Members of the Council asked questions arising from the update from the Director of Public Health and responses were provided, as summarised below:
- 9.18 Questions were asked regarding how in the context of higher infection rates, the city had anticipated and prepared practical measures for addressing the situation in Sheffield under the new upper tier local authority powers within the Department for Health and Social Care contain framework. Further questions were asked about whether the city had considered applying to enact its own local shielding rules and with regard to the implication in local messaging that a future lockdown was inevitable and the city was waiting for government intervention.
- 9.19 Greg Fell responded that if and when the Government imposed more restrictions on local authorities, there would be a recommendation to recommence shielding, although it was likely that would be a much narrower, defined cohort than before as more was now known about who was at risk. He did not know the exact timing of when that might happen. A written response would be provided in relation to the other question above.
- 9.20 Questions were asked about testing capacity and test and trace and with regard to making sure people isolated appropriately; and whether the local management of testing should be explored, given problems with national testing. Further questions were asked as to whether people should be recommended to use the NHS test and trace mobile app; and with regards to whether the focus should be on protecting vulnerable citizens by allowing them to isolate and permitting those not as susceptible to go about a more normal existence and if such an approach should be adopted in Sheffield. A question was also raised as to whether immunisation should be made compulsory, when it was available.
- 9.21 Mr Fell responded to the questions and said that it was unlikely that a robust vaccine would be available until approximately mid-spring 2021 and it remained to be seen how effective and how long immunity from that might be. He said that he did not support making vaccination compulsory as it might have unintended consequences and erode trust in vaccination which may have ramifications

elsewhere.

- 9.22 He said that with regards to comments relating to a strategy of herd immunity, he did not think that would be viable and it had never been successfully done anywhere in the world. If that strategy were to be pursued, it would allow the spread of the virus which had a 1 percent mortality rate which would lead to a number of deaths that would not be acceptable to people and it was not sensible for both clinical and epidemiological reasons.
- 9.23 Mr Fell said that with regard to the NHS app, it remained to be seen if the app would radically improve contact tracing. It was acknowledged that it was not a perfect solution, but it was improving, and he also recommended that people download and used the app, including the QR Codes as appropriate when visiting premises.
- 9.24 He said that in relation to local testing capacity, whilst this could be done in theory, the necessary resources would be needed and it could not be done within the local resources currently in place; and it would require an end to end solution from taking the test through to delivering the result and following interventions. Although both the teaching hospitals and universities had substantial laboratory capacity, the teaching hospital laboratory was at present either at or over capacity and the integrity of pillar one (the testing of NHS staff and patients) was essential.
- 9.25 Greg Fell explained that testing capacity was better than it had been previously, and the city had worked with the Government to manage that. It was still recommended that only people with symptoms got tested. The concern with regard to both testing and contact tracing was that it was not fast enough and this meant that some people were not being contacted quickly enough by the contact tracing system and there were particular concerns in relation to some communities. In relation to those communities, some local activity could be undertaken but not with regard to speeding up the test result process, which was not within local control.
- 9.26 A question was asked concerning work that was being done with schools to make sure children with symptoms relating to seasonal colds were not sent home, leading to families seeking Covid-19 tests in cases where children did not have Covid-19 symptoms.
- 9.27 Greg Fell stated that there was a written response to this matter which he could make sure was published and in summary, it was considered that schools had become quite adept at managing risks within guidelines and in conjunction with the Council's Public Health team, the Department for Education and Public Health England. Schools were managing individual cases and contacts with the Department for Education and there was also a helpline. The Public Health team and Public Health England were contacted if there was a significant number of cases or an outbreak. Advice had been issued to all schools on a number of occasions about how to differentiate between common cold, flu and Covid-19, based on something published by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and which had also been published on the BBC website.



- 9.28 A question was asked about cases of Covid-19 in the student population and concern amongst other residents in the vicinity of the universities and student population and as to whether there was confidence in the universities opening safely and whether the Council should be leading on this issue.
- 9.29 Mr Fell responded that this was an issue concerning 18-25 year olds and which was the cohort in which the virus was increasing most quickly. With the return of the high number of university students to Sheffield, the increase in cases was inevitable, as it was in the other university cities.
- 9.30 He said that both Universities had worked hard, including with the Council and they had robust plans in place and, whilst it was not certain whether those plans were operating to an optimal level, he believed they were managing cases to the best of their ability. The certain way to stop transmission in the universities was to close them and that would be a decision for the Government.
- 9.31 Mr Fell stated that the University of Sheffield had announced that it was ceasing face-to-face teaching for a fortnight and Sheffield Hallam University may follow. However, he said that he was not certain that action by itself would be sufficient to slow the spread of the virus in 18-25 year olds. He said that even with a policy of herd immunity, which he would not recommend, the spread would not be contained within that age group. The Government had been clear about the protection of educational opportunities and it was likely that action with regard to universities would be a last stage of government intervention and a further national lockdown. He said that work would continue with the universities, although he did not doubt that there would be more cases of Covid-19.
- 9.32 A question was asked about the effectiveness of antibody tests and whether those would be rolled out, if they were effective.
- 9.33 Mr Fell stated that antibody tests were not 100% accurate. There were false positives and false negatives with antibody testing and the tests were currently being used in the context of epidemiology. Some 100 thousand people were tested weekly as part of the Office for National Statistics national surveillance epidemiology. Based on the antibody response, six percent of the population had had the illness so far. Whilst this was useful in terms of epidemiology and surveillance, because of difficulties of interpreting results for individuals, the use of antibody tests was actively discouraged outside of established research programmes.
- 9.34 With regards to antibody tests being more widely available at the point of care or to purchase from pharmacies, whilst they were available, he was not of the view that any such tests were regulator approved and where they had been found for sale, regulatory action was taken.
- 9.35 The Council noted the information reported and thanked the Director of Public Health for his update.

(NOTE: During the above item of business, it was - RESOLVED: On the motion of The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) and seconded by The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Gail Smith), that the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 5.5 be suspended and the termination of the meeting be extended by 30 minutes, to 6.00 p.m., to provide an opportunity for Members of the Council to ask questions of the Director of Public Health.)