

MEETING:	Full Council
DATE:	Thursday, 4 February 2021
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY

MINUTES

Present

The Mayor (Councillor Makinson)

Central Ward

- Councillors Bruff and Dyson

Cudworth Ward

- Councillors Hayward, Houghton CBE and Wraith MBE

Darfield Ward

- Councillors Markham, Saunders and Smith

Darton East Ward

- Councillors Charlesworth, Hunt and Spence

Darton West Ward

- Councillors A. Cave, T. Cave and Howard

Dearne North Ward

- Councillors Gardiner, Gollick and Phillips

Dearne South Ward

- Councillors Danforth and C. Johnson

Dodworth Ward

- Councillors P. Birkinshaw, Fielding and Wright

Hoyland Milton Ward

- Councillors Franklin, Shepherd and Stowe

Kingstone Ward

- Councillors Murray and Williams

Monk Bretton Ward

- Councillors Felton, Green and Richardson

North East Ward

- Councillors Cherryholme, Ennis OBE and Higginbottom

Old Town Ward

- Councillors Lofts, Newing and Pickering

Penistone East Ward

- Councillors Barnard, Hand-Davis and Wilson

Penistone West Ward

- Councillors Greenhough, David Griffin and Kitching

Rockingham Ward

- Councillors Andrews BEM, Lamb and Sumner

Royston Ward

- Councillors Cheetham and McCarthy

St. Helen's Ward

- Councillors Leech, Platts and Tattersall

Stairfoot Ward

- Councillors Bowler, Gillis and W. Johnson

Wombwell Ward

- Councillors Eastwood, Frost and Daniel Griffin

Worsbrough Ward

- Councillors Carr, Clarke and Lodge

73. Act of Remembrance

The Mayor, Councillor Makinson, asked members to observe a minutes silence to reflect on the terrible milestone of 100,000 Covid-19 deaths nationally and more than 675 deaths in Barnsley. In addition, she commented that many more had died and suffered from the wider impact of the pandemic.

She also asked Members to mark the sad passing of Captain Sir Tom Moore as well as local war veteran Mr Tom Hicks a Royston resident aged 101 who both sadly died recently.

Mr Hicks had lived in Royston until his sad passing last week. He had served as a Royal Engineer and was attached to the 1st Para Squadron. He fought in North Africa, Sicily and in the Battle of Arnhem where he was parachuted in on the 17th September, 1944. After days of intense fighting he, along with many comrades, was sadly captured and forced to work in lead mines until the war was over. Tom lived to an amazing age of 101, was still actively playing tennis locally until the age of 99. He was an active member of Barnsley Breakfast Club for veterans and to celebrate his 99th birthday he had been invited by the then Mayor, Councillor Steve Green, to the Town Hall for a party in the Mayor's Parlour. For his 100th birthday his friends from Barnsley Breakfast Club arranged a special party at the Darfield Road Working Men's Club in Cudworth. There would be many residents across the borough who had fond memories of Tom and the Mayor had no doubt that he would be missed by many.

74. Declarations of Interests

The Mayor, Councillor Makinson, declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 78 'Housing Revenue Account' in her capacity as a Board Member of Berneslai Homes.

Councillor Lodge declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute no 78 'Housing Revenue Account' in view of him being a tenant of Berneslai Homes.

The Mayor, Councillor Makinson, and Councillors Andrews BEM, Cherryholme, Ennis OBE, Gardiner, Hayward, Sire Steve Houghton CBE, Leech, Platts, Richardson, Tattersall, Wraith and Wright declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 103 'No cuts in Universal Credit – Let Families keep the £20 increase' in view of them being members of Unite. Councillor Leech declared a non-pecuniary interest in this Minute in his capacity as a Branch Secretary for Unite. Councillor Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest in this Minute in his capacity as a national representative of Unite.

75. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 26th November, 2020 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

76. Communications

Barnsley Cultural Services

The Chief Executive was delighted to inform Members of the Council that Barnsley's Cultural Service had received national recognition in particular for their exemplar

practice in digital engagement and also in supporting the Covid response to the digitally excluded and most vulnerable in the borough.

The Local Government Association had highlighted this national best practice and as a result, Barnsley was the only case study presented at the LGA Member's Leadership Essentials Seminar on the subject of innovation last month. Officers had also been asked to lead a national seminar on the subject in March.

The National Archives had also highlighted the excellent work of the Archives Service in response to the pandemic in a best practice case study and Officers had also been asked to present at a national seminar for this. The success was underpinned by Barnsley's Digital First Strategy.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport had asked Barnsley Museums to provide digital content to showcase their work during the pandemic to Ministers and the Museums Service had also been asked by the NP 11 (the Group of the 11 Local Enterprise Partnerships from across the North of England) to provide a case study for a campaign using social media and PR to showcase the importance of heritage, arts, culture and nature in debate about northern economic renewal post Covid-19.

The Chief Executive was sure that Members would agree with her that having this great success of the Cultural Services highlighted in this way was a great plaudit for Barnsley.

Councillor Cheetham, Cabinet Member of Place (Regeneration and Culture) echoed the words of the Chief Executive and he asked to place on record his personal thanks to Sue Thiedeman, (Head of Culture & Visitor Economy) and to the whole team for the fantastic work they did. He highlighted the importance of the cultural assets of the borough which not only had an economic impact but also, the service involvement with everyone, including the vulnerable, in bringing people into gallery displays, performances and events.

The Service had been taken forward in an unexpected way and the digital first strategy was one of many initiatives that had enabled the Council to support digital investment and working in new ways. The Managers at all Levels Strategy had encouraged staff to take on issues, to be innovative and to bring forward their own ideas and it was from these strategies that the cultural initiatives referred to had come from.

The Cultural and Visitor Economy Team had been doing a fantastic job and the Cabinet Spokesperson had been saying so at every opportunity and this was recognised by all Members. It was also commendable that the Team were being supported in doing so by the wider Council. The Cabinet Spokesperson and Sue Thiedeman had been asked to speak at the LGA event to talk about how the Council had managed to achieve both national and world recognition for some of the work that had been done and it was amazing to see how many other Councils were not doing things such as developing their staff and giving them the freedom to innovate in the kind of ways that had brought so much to the borough, its residents and visitors over the last few months.

In concluding, he asked to thank not just the Cultural and Visitor Economy Team but the wider management of the Council as a whole.

The Mayor also echoed these comments and added her own personal congratulations to the Team. She stated that the work undertaken had been recognised worldwide and she had also received many comments from local residents who had logged on to look at some of the virtual exhibits/material that was available online.

77. Appointment to Outside Bodies

Moved by Councillor Howard – Seconded by Councillor Cherryholme; and

RESOLVED that the following appointments be made to the Outside Bodies detailed:

Shaw Lands Trust – Councillor Pickering

Safer Barnsley Partnership Board – Councillor Cherryholme

78. Housing Revenue Account - Draft 2021/22 Budget and Investment Proposals 2021-26 (Cab.13.1.2021/8)

Moved by Councillor Cheetham – Seconded by Councillor Frost: and

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as set out in Section 4 of the report submitted be noted;
- (ii) that the Housing Revenue Account Draft Budget for 2021/22 be approved, as outlined in Section 5, including the proposed revenue investments and savings, as outlined in Section 6, with any final amendments/additions being delegated to the Cabinet Spokespersons for Place and the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Cabinet Spokesman for Core Services and the Service Director - Finance (S151);
- (iii) that a rent increase in line with the Government's rent policy be approved;
- (iv) that it be noted that there is no proposed change to non-dwelling rents, service charges and heating charges for 2021/22;
- (v) that the 2021/22 Berneslai Homes Management Fee at paragraph 7.7 be approved, with any final amendments/additions delegated to the Cabinet Spokespersons for Place and the Service Director, Regeneration and Culture in consultation with the Cabinet Spokesman for Core Services and the Service Director - Finance (S151);
- (vi) that the 2021/22 Berneslai Homes Management Fee for both Gypsy and Traveller Sites be approved and in respect of the ESF Grant, both of which are charged to the Authority's General Fund, detailed at paragraphs 7.8 and 7.9 respectively;
- (vii) that approval be given to the commitment to the decarbonisation of the Council house stock with an initial investment of £1.9M in 2021/22;
- (viii) that approval be given in principle, the proposed emerging capital

priority schemes as detailed in Section 8, subject to individual reports as appropriate, in line with the Council's governance arrangements;

- (ix) that the Core Housing Capital Investment programme for 2021/22 be approved and that the indicative programme for 2022/23 through 2025/26, outlined in Section 8, be noted.

Note: Councillors Birkinshaw, Carr, Felton, Fielding, Gillis, Greenhough, Hunt, Kitching, Lodge and Wright voted against this item and a request was made for these votes to be recorded.

79. Planning Regulatory Board - 24th November, 2020

Moved by Councillor Richardson - Seconded by Councillor T Cave; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the proceedings of the Planning Regulatory Board held on the 24th November, 2020 be received.

80. Audit and Governance Committee - 2nd December, 2020

Moved by Councillor Lofts - Seconded by Councillor Barnard; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the proceedings of the Audit Committee held on the 2nd December, 2020 be received.

81. General Licensing Panels - Various

Moved by Councillor Wraith, MBE – Seconded by Councillor Clarke; and

RESOLVED that the details of the General Licensing Regulatory Board Panel held on the 12th January, 2021 together with its decision be received.

82. Appeals, Awards and Standards - Various

Moved by Councillor Shepherd – Seconded by the Mayor (Councillor Makinson); and

RESOLVED that the details of the various Appeals, Awards and Standards Regulatory Board Panels held in the last cycle of meetings together with their decisions be received.

83. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Strong and Resilient Workstream) - 1st December, 2020

Moved by Councillor Ennis OBE – Seconded by Councillor Newing; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the proceedings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Strong and Resilient Communities Workstream) held on the 1st December, 2020 be received.

84. Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 12th January, 2021

Moved by Councillor Ennis OBE – Seconded by Councillor Newing; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the proceedings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 12th January, 2021 be received

85. Central Area Council - 2nd November, 2020

Moved by Councillor Williams - Seconded by Councillor Lodge; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the proceedings of the Central Area Council held on the 2nd November, 2020 be received.

86. Dearne Area Council - 16th November, 2020

Moved by Councillor Gardiner – Seconded by Councillor Howard; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the proceedings of the Dearne Area Council held on the 16th November, 2020 be received.

87. North Area Council - 23rd November, 2020

Moved by Councillor Leech – Seconded by Councillor Tattersall; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the proceedings of the North Area Council held on the 23rd November, 2020 be received.

88. North East Area Council - 26th November, 2020

Moved by Councillor Hayward – Seconded by Councillor Wraith MBE; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the proceedings of the North East Area Council held on the 26th November, 2020 be received subject to the addition of the work 'Dodd' after the word 'Lawrence' in line 2 of Minute No 8 'Staffing Update'.

89. Penistone Area Council - 3rd December, 2020

Moved by Councillor Barnard – Seconded by Councillor Wilson; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the proceedings of the Penistone Area Council held on the 3rd December, 2020 be received.

90. South Area Council - 18th December, 2020

Moved by Councillor Markham - Seconded by Councillor Stowe; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the proceedings of the South Area Council held on the 18th December, 2020 be received.

91. Cabinet Meeting - 18th November, 2020

Moved by Councillor Sir Stephen Houghton, CBE – Seconded by Councillor Andrews BEM; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the Cabinet Meeting held on the 18th November, 2020 be received.

92. Cabinet Meeting - 2nd December, 2020

Moved by Councillor Sir Stephen Houghton, CBE – Seconded by Councillor Andrews BEM; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the Cabinet Meeting held on the 2nd December, 2020 be received.

93. Cabinet Meeting - 16th December, 2020

Moved by Councillor Sir Stephen Houghton, CBE – Seconded by Councillor Andrews BEM; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the Cabinet Meeting held on the 16th December, 2020 be received.

94. Cabinet Meeting - 13th January, 2021

Moved by Councillor Sir Stephen Houghton, CBE – Seconded by Councillor Andrews BEM; and

RESOLVED that the minutes as printed and now submitted of the Cabinet Meeting held on the 13th January, 2021 be received.

95. Questions relating to Joint Authority, Police and Crime Panel and Combined Authority Business

The Chief Executive reported that she had received no questions from Elected Members in accordance with Standing Order No. 12.

96. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority - 12th October, 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

97. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority - 23rd November, 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

98. Police and Crime Panel - 10th November, 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

99. Police and Crime Panel (Draft) - 14th December, 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

100. Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Board (Draft) - 16th November, 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

101. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority - 10th December, 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

102. Questions by Elected Members

The Chief Executive reported that she had received a number of questions from Elected Members in accordance with Standing Order No. 11.

(a) Councillor Wilson

‘South Yorkshire Municipal Waste Strategy - One of the key priorities of the Strategy is to encourage our residents to recycle more. When is the Council going to be in a position to allow residents to recycle more plastic waste? At present we only recycle plastic bottles’

Councillor Lamb, Cabinet Spokesperson for Place (Environment and Transportation) thanked Councillor Wilson for raising what was a very important question given the climate and environmental crisis facing the planet. In starting to answer this question he asked to give his thanks to all of the Waste and Recycling Teams that had been operating throughout the borough particularly in the last 12 months during the Covid pandemic and also during the inclement weather since the New Year. He felt that people would have noticed that in order to catch up on rounds the Teams had been out on Saturdays and Sundays collecting waste across the borough.

In terms of addressing the specific question raised, he stated that the Council was exploring how it could improve the recycling offer to residents and this issue was currently being discussed with the current contractor.

It was hoped that discussions would be concluded shortly and that, as a result, it would be possible to extend the range of plastics that were able to be accepted at the kerbside. The aim was that this would commence in the new financial year 2021/22.

This year, the South Yorkshire Municipal Waste Strategy was to be reviewed. This would consider and incorporate advancements in the government’s environmental strategies.

Sheffield City Region budgets would be allocated to the regions’ priorities and evaluated against key criteria. Key infrastructure such as household waste and recycling centres would be reviewed in line with the government’s Resources and Waste Strategy.

It should also be noted that the Resource and Waste Strategy for England was currently under consultation and would potentially result in several large-scale changes to the way local authorities collected waste from 2023. This Strategy would focus on waste minimisation alongside increased recycling and other schemes such as deposit return schemes. In addition, this Strategy may change what the Council collected and how often it was collected.

Councillor Wilson thanked Councillor Lamb for his response and also thanked the Waste and Recycling Teams for all their hard work particularly during the current inclement weather. His supplementary question was going to relate to whether the

City Region Budget could be used to improve investment into waste management infrastructure, and this had been answered in the original response.

(b) Councillor Lodge

'In November 2019, the Cabinet Member for Place (Regeneration and Culture) advised Members that the Council had launched an energy tariff to support residents at risk of fuel poverty. At the time, the partner energy provider was experiencing financial difficulties and despite these difficulties, residents were still encouraged to sign up. Since then, what has been done to ensure residents aren't out of pocket with their energy transfer to a Big 6 Supplier and support residents at risk or experiencing fuel poverty in the future?'

Councillor Cheetham, Cabinet Spokesperson for Place (Regeneration and Culture) thanked Councillor Lodge for his question. He stated that when Centrica took over the Robin Hood Energy portfolio, they guaranteed that each customer would retain their existing Robin Hood Energy tariff terms and conditions. No one was out of pocket as a result of the transfer.

In addition, the Council's Sustainability and Climate Change Team had contacted all of the borough's Robin Hood Energy customers, by phone call and letter, to make sure that they understood the process, and provided extra support if they needed it. As a result of this, 111 households had been referred to the Warm Homes Team for further switching advice.

Councillor Lodge thanked Councillor Cheetham for his response and noted the welcome news that some tenants had taken up the offer from the Warm Homes Team. He then asked, as a supplementary question, what the process would be for ensuring that residents were not left out of pocket once the tariff 'ran out' with the new supplier.

Councillor Cheetham responded by stating that the Warm Homes Team were adept at this process and in finding the best deal and would indeed do so once that tariff ran out. There would, of course, be some work to do in identifying what the best tariff would be.

In reference to the discussion on the Housing Revenue Account and the costs of heating for residents earlier in the meeting, he reminded Members that Robin Hood Energy had been established by Nottingham City Council as a way of addressing the issue of energy costs for residents but ultimately the company had collapsed. This had been financially damaging both for the Council and residents. This was delicate area and one that was currently in the process of change. Many Members would be aware that many energy companies were experiencing some astronomical losses as a result of the pandemic and this would, therefore, prove to be a challenge in being able to identify which companies were providing the best tariffs and costs going forward. Members should be assured, however, that the Team would be looking at these issues very closely in order to ensure that they did their best for the borough's residents.

(c) Councillor Kitching

'Please can the Cabinet Member for Core Services supply a month-by-month breakdown of:

- a) *The amount of Council Tax arrears*
- b) *The amount of Berneslai Homes rent arrears*

since the start of the pandemic in March 2020?

Councillor Gardiner, Cabinet Member for Core Services, stated that he had a breakdown of the data which he would supply after the meeting. Referring to the headline figures he stated that in April 2020 the closing forecast balance for the Council Tax Arrears was £5.737m and at December 2020 this was at £5.173m.

With regard to rent arrears, a breakdown would also be provided but in summary, in March 2020 gross rent arrears were £1.853m and in January 2021 this stood at just over £2m.

Councillor Kitching thanked Councillor Gardiner for his response and she stated that she looked forward to receiving the more detailed figures. As a supplementary question she asked whether the Council was doing anything different to usual in terms of trying to recoup the lost income.

In relation to Council Tax arrears Councillor Gardiner stated that the Council was undertaking various actions to try to recoup these losses. There was no statutory collection or enforcement activity between March and August 2020. However, the Council had set up a dedicated Covid-19 Financial Support line to provide financial advice and guidance to residents. People had been proactively signposted to all the available government and local support schemes and a targeted communications campaign had been undertaken to reach out to people in arrears and to encourage contact and engagement. Payments deferrals had been agreed for up to three months where residents were experiencing financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic.

With regard to rent arrears he commented that Berneslai Homes had provided additional support to tenants focusing on prevention followed by early intervention to stop arrears from escalating. Income and benefit entitlement assessments were completed, and voluntary sustainable repayment plans were encouraged to avoid legal action and costs.

Skilled officers in the Rents and Tenants First Team provided advice and practical assistance with benefit claims, utility bills and problems with Universal Credit. The Council also funded a Money Advice Worker post within the Citizens Advice Bureau to support those people with multiple debts or complex issues.

During the pandemic, staff had been proactive in monitoring accounts for signs of financial pressures and contacting people to discuss the issues they were experiencing. To date, the Council had assisted 92 families, secured £82,757 in funding from the hardship fund that had helped to reduce arrears accrued. Tenants First had supported 927 families in this period and 117 had received in depth advice from the Money Advice Worker.

(d) Councillor Lofts

'If we are to enable residents to get out of their cars and choose alternative transport, we must ensure they are safe to travel on our roads. Whilst Barnsley has many

kilometres of safe off-road cycle ways; how many kilometres of safe, dedicated cycle lanes are there on Barnsley's roads?'

Councillor Lamb, Cabinet Spokesperson for Place (Environment and Transportation) thanked Councillor Lofts for his question the points raised therein being very close to his own heart.

The question was, however, quite complex as consideration had to be given as to whether or not it concerned the whole highway or the carriageway as well as on road and off road, shared footways, cycleways that followed the road alignment as well as those that didn't.

Rightly, Councillor Lofts had identified the leisure and off-road cycling offer of Barnsley and when considering that the borough had the Trans-Pennine Trail, a whole host of disused railways and former colliery land, without doubt the area had some of the best leisure cycling in the country.

There were, of course, some restrictions in terms of what could be achieved because extending the existing on-road offer did have limitations for example, the width of space available to extend was limited in some cases with narrow roads and streets. To give more space would require demolition of properties. In addition, the depth of services and utilities in footways was less than in the highway carriageway and any extension could result in these requiring to be moved.

There were, therefore, a number of issues and complexities facing the Council but not everything was bad news. Some of the recent developments had included a cycling link between Canal Street near Asda, Barnsley to Woodstock Road/Smithies Lane, the Pontefract Road cycleway, Junction 38 to the Town Centre cycle route, Park Springs Road to Broomhill cycle route, Great Houghton to Park Springs cycle route, Burton Road to Cundy Cross, Gilroyd to Broadway, Keresforth Hill to Keresforth Hall, Pogmoor Road to the Town Centre, Darfield to Goldthorpe cycleway and the Ardsley to Darfield cycleway. Taking all of these routes into consideration a conservative estimate was that there was 13 kilometres that aligned with the carriageway.

The long-term aspiration for safe, active travel through and around Barnsley was being developed at pace through the dedicated Strategic Transportation Team. It should also be noted that currently a review was underway which it was hoped would provide additional capacity and expertise in order for the Council to attract more funding to deliver new safe cycling routes.

To date, most of the historic improvements in cycling infrastructure had been centred around improvement works to the well-used Trans-Pennine Trail. The Council was now working with its Partners at the Sheffield City Region Combined Mayoral Authority and the Barnsley Cycle Forum to deliver the recently adopted Local Cycle Walking and Infrastructure Plan setting out the long-term aspiration for an enhanced active travel network in Barnsley.

Through the Transforming Cities Fund and Active Travel Fund, the Council had a target to deliver 6km of safe on and off-road cycle provision over the next 18 months.

Councillor Lofts thanked Councillor Lamb for the response, and he stated that he looked forward to safe cycleways coming forward on Barnsley's roads in the future but he declined to ask a supplementary question.

(e) Councillor Lodge

'Given the change in working habits, there has been a significant increase in recyclable and non-recyclable waste in households across the Borough. In order to limit the impact of this increased waste, is it now time to look at increased waste collection?'

Councillor Lamb, Cabinet Spokesperson for Place (Environment and Transportation) thanked Councillor Lodge for the question which was exercising the minds of many people at this moment.

The Council's current offer allowed households to recycle and dispose of multiple different waste streams conveniently at the kerbside. Although there had been an increase in household waste due to the impact of Covid-19 and people being at home, there was little understanding of what this would look like moving forward.

The Waste and Recycling Team was closely monitoring the changes in tonnages based on this. Should it become apparent that the trend was not temporary, the Council would be in the best position to tackle the issue.

As mentioned earlier in the response to Councillor Wilson's question, the Resource and Waste Strategy for England was currently under consideration and would potentially result in several large-scale changes to the way local authorities collected waste from 2023. The Strategy focused on waste minimisation alongside increased recycling and other schemes such as deposit return schemes. This strategy may change what the Council collected and how often it was collected.

A combination of these two factors could mean that the Council would need to look at the current model, however, until more data and guidance was available from the government, it was difficult to give any specifics on how this might look.

Councillor Lodge did not ask a supplementary question.

(f) Councillor Greenhough

'Has there been a drop off in the number of foster carers taking on short term and emergency placements since the start of the pandemic in March 2020? This has been reported elsewhere due to foster carers shielding and anxieties about bringing others into the household.'

Councillor Bruff, Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked Councillor Greenhough for his question. She stated that Barnsley had been successfully accommodating children with in-house foster carers through the pandemic. The Council had appropriately matched children's needs to foster carer's skills, knowledge and experience with continued success.

The number of children placed with Barnsley foster carers during the pandemic increased from 159 in February 2020 to 185 in December 2020.

The Council firmly believed that there was a strong sense of commitment from the community of foster carers. There was no evidence of in-house foster carers reducing their care capacity for Barnsley children in their homes.

During the pandemic, the number of children placed with external agencies had reduced and this was now in line with Barnsley sufficiency targets.

This was supported by the introduction of The Mockingbird Family Model in November 2019, which delivered a high level of virtual training and supervision support.

Councillor Greenhough thanked Councillor Bruff for the response and he very much welcomed the figures. He also placed on record his thanks to the Executive Director Children's Services and her Team and all foster carers for the amazing work they did but he declined to ask a supplementary question.

Councillor Bruff stated that the Council was still recruiting foster carers and anyone listening on the webcast of the meeting who wanted to come forward could do so by accessing the information on the website or by contacting Children's Services of any Member of the Council.

(g) Councillor Hunt

'How many reported incidents of fly tipping have there been in the last year, and how does this compare to previous years?'

Councillor Lamb, Cabinet Spokesperson for Place (Environment and Transportation) thanked Councillor Hunt for his question

He stated that unfortunately there had been an increase in fly tipping across the borough. Except for animal carcass waste, all other areas had seen an increase between 2019 and 2020.

In 2019 (Jan-Dec) there had been 3,893 reports

In 2020 (Jan-Dec) there had been 5,254 reports

This represented an increase, year on year, of 35%

He stated that he would provide a table of data for waste tipped in 2019 and 2020 after the meeting.

A large proportion of the increase in fly tipping was attributable to waste generated from households. Most instances are small loads and more than likely come from a single household.

Hotspot data showed a significant increase in tipping in urban areas such as backings between streets/roads. Examples of hotspot areas were Blenheim Road and St Georges Back Road, Castle Street and Day Street Back Road, Clarendon Street and Racecommon Road Back Road and Doncaster Road and Osborne Street Back Road

The Council had been historically been strong at reducing the levels of fly tipping. Teams would be brought together from within the authority and external partners to work together to reduce the rises seen over 2020.

Some of this work has already started. The Council would continue to offer the Bulky Collection Service. Demand had increased with the Service receiving 31.54% (1869) more orders in 2020 than 2019. A dedicated task force had tackled fly tipping in a cluster of streets in Goldthorpe. With the aid of a valuable fly tipping tracker and the fantastic job Neighbourhood Services were doing, waste was still collected within the five day service level agreement (following the receipt of the report).

Councillor Hunt thanked Councillor Lamb for his response and he commented that he was not surprised to see the increase in fly tipping across the borough. He then asked as a supplementary question if the Council would consider joining around 40 other local authorities including York City Council in adopting the Keep Britain Tidy 'Crime Not to Care' Campaign which focused on helping residents to understand that they had a legal responsibility, when handing over waste to another person, to ensure that such persons had the necessary waste carriers licence and to make a note of the number. The failure to undertake this simple task could lead to the imposition on a householder of a fine and a criminal record if the waste was fly tipped and it was traced back to them.

Councillor Lamb stated that this information about waste carriers' licences was something that the Service was involved with within the borough not only via the Council's Communications Team but also with the Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Waste Partnership. Having said that, he was always keen to look at anything that may indeed help and may raise the awareness of the public in terms of the responsible disposal of any waste. He, therefore, gave an assurance that he would raise and discuss the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign with Service Managers.

(h) Councillor Kitching

'How many children have been deregistered from schools since they re-opened in September, 2020?'

Councillor Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson for Children's Services thanked Councillor Kitching for her question. She stated that in total, there had been 238 children whose parents had notified schools of their intention to electively home educate since September 2020.

In this same period, 25 children had either returned to school or moved out of the area, therefore, leaving the Electively Home Educate Register in Barnsley.

113 of these notifications had been received in September 2020, which was double the number of children who were de-registered and transferred to electively home educate in September 2019.

This increase had been seen regionally and nationally, and the increase in Barnsley was lower than the regional average of 125 for September.

Not all of the 113 notifications cited Covid-19 as the reason, but it appeared as a factor in most cases. Parents had cited concerns about the health of vulnerable extended family members and fear of their children transmitting the virus.

Extensive work had been undertaken with families to reduce anxiety throughout the summer months in preparation for the return to school.

The Education Welfare Service worked with schools to identify families that were feeling anxious in respect of the return to statutory school attendance. This resulted in targeted whole family working to reduce anxiety and manage the transition from remote working to school setting.

The Communications and Marketing Team also ran a campaign to provide support to parents in addressing any concerns they or their children had been experiencing.

Councillor Kitching thanked Councillor Bruff for her response which was much as she had anticipated. She then asked, as a supplementary question, how the Council was balancing its obligation around this against the concerns that some of these children had only been de-registered because of anxiety around Covid. She was aware that when families declared they were to home educate their children there was only so much that the Authority could do in terms of monitoring and intervention.

Councillor Bruff felt that Barnsley kept in contact more with children and families who were home educating than many other authorities. Once Councillor Kitching received the response to her next question she would see some of that information outlined. Councillor Kitching was right, however, that the Council was limited in what it was allowed to do. At one time, schools kept these children on their register in the hope that they would eventually come back to school. The Council had been informed, however, that this was no longer permitted.

The Authority did have Education Welfare Officers attending the homes of such children and the Council was obliged to check if those pupils were still on Elective Home Education on a yearly basis and to seek assurance that they were receiving the right type of education relative to their age. The Council did, however, keep in contact with families whose children were home educated but a lot of the information that Councillor Kitching was seeing was contained within the response to her next question.

In accordance with Standing Order 11(2)(d), the time limit of a maximum of 30 minutes permitted for Member questions having been reached, the Mayor stated that a written response to all outstanding questions would be circulated to all Members of the Council.

103. No Cuts in Universal Credit - Let Families keep the £20 increase

Notice of Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order No 6

The following motion which aimed to maintain the income of low- and middle-income families was:

Moved by Councillor Ennis OBE – Seconded by Councillor Cherryholme:

That this council notes:

- Next April the Government plan to cut the benefit level for millions of claimants by ending of the time limited increase to the basic rate of Universal Credit (and the tax credit equivalent) announced by the Chancellor on 20th March as part

of his pandemic response package.

- The £20 a week boost reflected the reality that the level of benefits were not adequate to protect the swiftly increasing number of households relying on them as the crisis hit. Exactly because that increase was a very significant and welcome move to bolster low- and middle-income families living standards, its removal will be a huge loss.
- Pressing ahead would see the level of unemployment support fall to its lowest real-terms level since 1990-91, and it's lowest ever relative to average earnings. Indeed, the basic level of out-of-work support prior to the March boost was – at £73 a week (£3,800 a year) – less than half the absolute poverty line.
- The increase in benefits have had a positive effect on the lives of thousands of local claimants who are better able to pay for life's essentials such as food, clothing and utilities.
- The local economy has also benefited from the increase in benefit levels as claimants spend their money locally thereby supporting local businesses and jobs.

RESOLVED that the Council

- (i) Write to the Chancellor, Rushi Sunak and to the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson demanding that the £20 increase to Universal Credit is made permanent and extended to claimants on legacy benefits; and
- (ii) Work with other local government organisations to form a coalition to pressure the government to make the £20 increase to Universal Credit permanent.

.....
Chair