

## Council Meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Questions Received from Members of the Public, answered by the Relevant Policy Committee Chairs

Name of Questioner	Question	Relevant Policy Committee Chair(s)
Val Wilson	<p>I need to ask about the request I made at the Council meeting in July asking if a plaque could be produced and installed at my bungalow, as I have lived there for 51 years this year since they were built in 1973.</p> <p><b><i>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</i></b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	Cllr Douglas Johnson (Chair of the Housing Policy Committee)
David Cronshaw (not present at the meeting to ask his questions)	<p>My questions for the Council are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how many employees does the council employ</li> <li>- how many employees are working from home part time</li> <li>- how many employees are working from home full time</li> </ul> <p><b>Answer</b> - The City Council has around 2,000 front line employees, based all across the city and their roles cannot be undertaken at home. Approximately 6,000 employees have the ability to work flexibly, and we support a mature approach of balancing office and home working based on individual roles, accountabilities and the ability to work collaboratively with colleagues. We do not routinely offer home based employment contracts, but we have a small number of employees who are full time home workers, due to specific work roles or reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>The total number of employees working for the Council on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 was 8,575.</p>	Cllr Tom Hunt (Leader of the Council & Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee)



	<p>been made clear that further action has taken place in relation to individual Council Officer roles through the project, it is not clear what actions have been taken by politicians in relation to their role. Audit and Standards could, for example, have used their powers to recommend Strategy and Resources Committee have further discussion following the IA Report on the political context of the Fargate Container Project and I am not sure why they did not.</p> <p>So in terms of the public interest we are in an unsatisfactory situation - in fact where the public interest has not yet been served. Elected members in Audit and Standards have refused to exercise the role they are supposed to in overseeing and endorsing appropriate changes to council systems as a result of IA. But nor have they provided a means whereby political errors or failures of oversight and scrutiny might be understood better and addressed or mitigated for the future.</p> <p>So where will weaknesses or failures in political decision-making or scrutiny systems be addressed in the light of the Fargate container project? The formative decisions on the project took place under the old executive leadership arrangements and about which there is almost no information at all, although there are certainly some remaining questions about the role of personal political connections and potential conflicts of interest in the project. But it is also no secret that (at least in my view) there was and remains a real lack of attention to how proper scrutiny functions have been brought into the new constitution and committee system. Who and where is addressing these questions (and in light of the container project), to ensure the public interest is being served?</p> <p><b><i>Answers were provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</i></b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	
Isobel O’Leary	Following the Council's apology to the Courts for misleading them in two cases, does the Council have any message for other Local Authorities about the wisdom of misusing public money to take out injunctions against environmental protestors?	Cllr Tom Hunt (Leader of the Council & Chair of the Strategy and Resources

	<p><b><i>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</i></b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	Policy Committee)
Dave Dilner	<p>Will the Council Leader agree with me that it is highly regrettable that nobody has yet been held to account for the mismanagement, etc, highlighted in the Lowcock Report?</p> <p><b><i>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</i></b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	Cllr Tom Hunt (Leader of the Council & Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee)
Justin Buxton (question asked by Mark James)	<p>Did the Council seek a barrister's opinion at any point, in order to inform their apology for misleading courts to The Lord High Chancellor, signed by two very senior officers, both with a significant role in this matter?</p> <p>Or did the signatories rely solely upon the solicitors' view furnished to Sir Mark Lowcock and subsequently published in his report: That the fake, deliberately misleading and contractually irrelevant, 5yr Tree Strategy document, which was falsely and intentionally presented as a legitimate revision (7) of a contractual document... actually, authored by SCC rather than Amey as per section 6.34 and annex 3 of the Streetsahead contract .... did not have any bearing upon the resultant judgements referred to – as the solicitors engaged apparently believe and advised?</p> <p><b><i>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</i></b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	Cllr Tom Hunt (Leader of the Council & Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee)
Lynne Chapman	<p>What steps will be taken this year to make bus travel more attractive to the public?</p> <p><b><i>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</i></b></p>	Cllr Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee)

	<a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a>	
<p>Hilary Smith</p>	<p>The International Court of Justice has ruled that there is a plausible case against Israel for committing the crime of genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza. Israel has been told that it must refrain from any acts that could be considered genocide. However, Israel has ignored this ruling and continues indiscriminate bombing, continues with the collective punishment of the population by turning off water, food, medical and power supplies and refusing to allow adequate humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza area. This means that any government, institution or business that is aiding Israel's attack in Gaza could be complicit in any acts of genocide being committed by Israel.</p> <p>Sheffield Council could be included in this complicity. Sheffield is part of South Yorkshire Pension Authority and the Border to Coast Pension Partnership. Sheffield Council is indirectly investing in arms companies that are selling weapons to Israel, currently being used to kill thousands upon thousands of Palestinians, which the ICJ is investigating as the crime of genocide. These investments include the following companies: Airbus, BAE systems, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Rolls Royce and other companies, all of which are involved in making military weapons such as fighter jets, bombs and drones, and selling them to Israel to use against the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza, and also in the West Bank. South Yorkshire Pension Authority also invests in Barclays and HSBC, banks that fund these companies in the production of weapons.</p> <p>These investments are potentially making Sheffield Council complicit in war crimes and genocide. Pension holders have repeatedly requested that Sheffield seeks ways to divest from these companies. As Sheffield Council is part of wider pension arrangements involving a number of other local authorities, I am fully aware that Sheffield Council is unable to divest from these companies without achieving wider agreement with these other authorities.</p> <p>Will Sheffield make a statement about these investments and possible complicity in war crimes and take it forward to the South Yorkshire Pension Authority and the Border to Coast Pension Partnership?</p>	<p>Cllr Tom Hunt (Leader of the Council &amp; Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee)</p>

	<p>What other steps will Sheffield Council take to work towards SYPA and Borders to Coast reducing their potential complicity in war crimes against the Palestinian people?</p> <p><b>Answers were provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	
Val Johnson	<p>After the ruling of the International Court of Justice, it is now accepted that Israel is committing genocidal actions in Gaza and will be held to account for this in due course. Interim instructions issued by the ICJ to prevent genocidal actions by its army have been ignored by Israel. Meanwhile in the West Bank close to 8,000 people, including women and children have been placed in Administrative Detention (ie without charge or trial), hundreds have been shot dead, invasions of refugee camps by the Israeli occupation forces and attacks by violent settlers are daily occurrences. There is a global outcry against these outrages, which is reflected in our city. Having responded with alacrity to the invasion of Ukraine, issuing a statement of “unity and solidarity” with the Ukrainian people will the Council now issue a statement in which Sheffield stands in unity and solidarity with Palestinians and endorses and supports the legal processes underway to hold Israel to account at the ICJ?</p> <p><b>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p> <p><i>(NB. Another question received from Val Johnson was not accepted by the Lord Mayor on the grounds that it related to a matter not being within the responsibility of the City Council.)</i></p>	Cllr Tom Hunt (Leader of the Council & Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee)
Annie O’Gara	<p>On January 26<sup>th</sup>, the International Court of Justice ruled that South Africa’s charge of Genocide against Israel was sufficiently plausible for the case to be heard in full. In its interim ruling, the Court instructed Israel, inter alia, to “refrain from any acts that could fall under the Genocide Convention and to ensure its troops commit</p>	Cllr Dawn Dale (Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee)

*no genocidal acts in Gaza” and “to take measures to improve the humanitarian situation for Palestinian civilians.”*

None of this has happened. 174 Palestinian civilians were slaughtered in the 24 hours following the Court’s ruling; shelters are still being bombed; hospitals are still besieged; aid convoys have faced protests by crowds of flag-waving Israeli citizens; 80 bodies, which had been stolen by Israel from a vandalised Gaza cemetery, were sent back from Israel in a lorry, now so badly decomposed that their identification and dignified reburial – as humans with names - was impossible. The list goes on.

All of us - including our youngsters - are seeing this livestreamed on social media and faithfully reported on Al Jazeera.

In relation to this, the Coalition has been told that some Sheffield schools are failing their pupils on a number of levels:-

- The ICJ ruling on genocide should be a curriculum element in all schools given its importance and rarity, because active citizenship means understanding the rule of law, both UK and international.
- Young people should be guided to reliable reference points for forming their own opinions, such as internationally respected human rights bodies like Amnesty International and Human Rights watch.
- Youngsters need to talk and test their views, whatever those views, in a safe environment, with teachers.
- Is this sensible pedagogy dominating? No. Many students, distressed by what they see on social media and asking what is being done about it, are further distressed by a silence on Palestine imposed by some schools, a silence which stands in sharp contrast to fulsome support and open discussion of Ukraine’s invasion by Russia - youngsters know double standards when they see them, and so do their parents.

Does the Council recognise that legitimate discussion is being suppressed in our city’s schools?

	<p>What mechanism has been established for concerns to be reported to the Council by parents, youngsters and teachers?</p> <p><b>Answers were provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	
Izzy Price	<p>The Tyndall report recommendations are for the whole city rather than just the Council. Had these been followed by the Council we should have reduced emissions by between 40 - 50% by now. The Council recently announced it has reduced its emissions by 3% since 2019. How will this reduction be increased in 2024?</p> <p><b>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	Cllr Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee)
Ci Davis	<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Growth of 3% per annum is considered normal; this doubles the size of the economy every 24 years. Over 50% of total CO2 emissions have occurred since the Rio Summit 1992. At current rates this will be over 75% by 2050, the date set for global Net Zero. As there has been very little decoupling of GDP from energy or resource use, even if ‘hoped-for’ technologies to meaningfully reduce atmospheric CO2 can be developed, the timescale will almost certainly be too late to meet the 2-degree climate target, let alone the 1.5-degree target, and the impact upon all the other planetary boundaries, will not even have been addressed.</p> <p>The impossibility of infinite growth on a finite planet cannot be refuted. Yet the Council is aiming to meet its Net Zero Commitment by 2030 within this Growth-Led economic model. Any challenge to the model is something all politicians find almost impossible to consider – and yet there is a lot of evidence to suggest preparation for reduction of industrial production must be contemplated, whether we like it or not.</p> <p><b>Question</b></p>	Cllr Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee)



	<p>In this context would the Council outline the scientific and economic assumptions, with evidence to support those assumptions, that are being made to suggest that there can be an absolute decoupling of the city's emissions from the city's GDP?</p> <p>Further, could the Council clarify whether it considers that council commitments to both citizens, particularly the most vulnerable, and the environment, is possible without sustained levels of economic growth in the region of 3% p.a?</p> <p>If the Council is unable to provide reliable evidence that Net Zero can be achieved with the planned economic growth, and given the political sensitivity of considering alternative economic models, would the Council consider investment, of a relatively small amount of money, to support an independent summit, to consider how a post-growth/de-growth/donut/steady state economy could be developed in Sheffield, along the lines of the 2023 EU Beyond Growth Conference?</p> <p><b>Answers were provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	
Graham Wroe	<p>1. In 2019 when the Council declared a Climate Emergency, Extinction Rebellion asked you to prioritise Climate Information and Action in Council Communications. For instance, we wanted Climate Action to be clearly visible to any casual visitor of the Council website and we wanted the Council Leader to use the annual Council Tax letter as an opportunity to educate the public about the dangers the planetary crises such as the climate and nature emergencies present us with and what the Council is doing to mitigate them. There is still no link from the front page of the website to information about climate change, and the Council Tax letter usually contains half a sentence referring to Climate Change. There is a wealth of information on the Council website, but it is not in a format that anyone apart from climate nerds like me are likely to read. The page about Net Zero still links prominently to COP26 events so obviously hasn't been updated for 2 years. This is not acting as if there is an emergency. When will the Council start to do this?</p>	Cllr Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee)

	<p>2. Sheffield's resilience to extreme weather needs to improve as global heating continues and extreme weather events become more frequent and more extreme.</p> <p>(i) What preparations have been made for the next extreme heatwave? Are the Council aware of which council houses and care homes are particularly vulnerable to overheating in a heatwave? What provision will there be for people in such accommodation the next time thermometers reach 40C? Rotherham has a <u>Heatwave Action Plan</u>. Is Sheffield developing one?</p> <p>(ii) The Upper Don Flood Alleviation Scheme is now complete, which is good news. But with sea levels rising and the likelihood of heavy storms increasing we need to continue to improve flood defences, both natural and engineered. Which parts of the city are now most vulnerable to flooding? What progress has been made in natural methods of flood alleviation, to stop water running off the moors so quickly? When will beavers be reintroduced to the city? What flood prevention measures will be progressed in 2024?</p> <p>(iii) The incidence of wildfires is also increasing. The Fire Brigade need more resources to cope with this, as well as floods and storms. Will the Council lobby the Government for an increase in the Revenue Support Grant to help the Fire Brigade keep us all safe?</p> <p><b>Answers were provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	
Ruth Owen	<p>When looking at food emissions, the type of food we eat matters more than how far it's travelled because food miles account for just a tiny proportion of emissions. For example, meat and dairy production in the UK accounts for 50% of our methane emissions - and scientists say we must cut methane by 45% this decade. A recent analysis of UK diets showed that plant-based diets result in 75% less greenhouse emissions, water pollution and land use than diets with more than 100g of meat a day. They also cut wildlife destruction by 66% and water use by 54%. UK diets and production are currently unsustainable. If everyone had the same production-to-consumption ratio as the</p>	Cllr Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee)

	<p>UK, we would need another planet the size of Mercury to feed the world.</p> <p>Please could Sheffield Council follow the lead of 25 towns and cities worldwide, including Edinburgh, Norwich, Exmouth, Haywards Heath, Lambeth, by endorsing the Plant Based Treaty and developing a plant-based food strategy to help to normalise and expand access to plant-based foods.</p> <p><b><i>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</i></b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	
Zak Viney	<p>As raised within this meeting today, Sheffield City Council is trailing behind on its decarbonisation goals, following its declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. Whilst I appreciate and empathise that the Council will have not received sufficient support from the national government to address these targets, I believe, with the stakes so high, for the prospectus of future generations globally, that these are failures we should not be willing to accept.</p> <p>So, I come to this meeting today to merely not complain, but propose a policy change to address this target, whilst also increasing health and wellbeing, reducing light pollution and making our public realm a more attractive place to be.</p> <p>My suggestion is Sheffield introduces an immediate ban and removal of digital billboard advertising. Now, you might think this sounds novel, or a nice to have, but hear me out. Picture one clearchannel advertising board, usually placed on the side or in the middle of a pavement, impeding pedestrians, the disabled and distracting motorists. Just one board consumes as much energy as 3 family homes. Not only is this exceedingly wasteful, but this advertising is often concentrated in areas of social economic depravity, advertising things that people living there may not afford, or damaging for public health such as junk food, gambling or alcoholic products. Could Sheffield follow in the wake of cities such as Bristol, Grenoble, Lyon or Amsterdam and introduce strict regulations on outdoor advertising, a win for people's wellbeing, the public realm and sustainability goals?</p>	Cllr Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee)

	<p><b><i>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</i></b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	
<p>Clara Cheung</p>	<p>In the UN Human Rights Council’s universal periodic review in Jan and Feb of 2024, there was a significant rise in the number of UN Member States submitting questions, from 9 in 2009 to 36 in 2024, indicating increased global scrutiny of the human rights record in the People’s Republic of China (China), especially concerning international legal obligations. The UK representative at the UN particularly urged China to stop the persecution and arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and Tibetans. He also asked China to repeal the National Security Law in Hong Kong as recommended by the UN and cease prosecutions, including of the HK media owner, Jimmy Lai.</p> <p>The new Partner City Policy approved by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee of Sheffield City Council on 20 Nov, 2023, stated that:  “It is without doubt that international partnerships can bring many benefits to the Council and residents of the city, but only if they fit within the Council’s priorities and are vibrant and active... The Partner City Policy needs to have sufficient flexibility to enable relationships to be reviewed and potentially relinquished, if the arrangement no longer fits with the Council’s priorities or has the potential to cause reputational damage.”</p> <p>It is obvious that Sheffield City Council will have reputational damage if it keeps endorsing a regime that seriously violates human rights (which is acknowledged by our UK representatives at the UN).</p> <p>So, my question is: when will Sheffield City Council terminate its twinning relationship and trade agreement with the cities ruled by the People’s Republic of China regime?</p> <p><b><i>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</i></b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	<p>Cllr Tom Hunt  (Leader of the Council &amp; Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee)</p>

<p>Julie Pearn</p>	<p>In the 1980's Sheffield declared itself an apartheid-free zone and the City Council banked with the Co-operative, an ethical choice. Barclays Bank was a 'pariah institution', shunned by a generation because of its huge investments in the apartheid South African economy and its military.</p> <p>In 2014 the Council switched all its banking to Barclays.</p> <p>In 2018 the Council adopted its ethical procurement policy. This included tests against contracting with companies guilty of Gross Misconduct, specifically breach of International Human Rights.</p> <p>In March 2022 environmental activists urged the Council not to renew its contract with Barclays, as the biggest European investor in fossil fuels.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the Council went ahead and renewed its contract with Barclays in September 2022.</p> <p>Once again Barclays Bank is outstanding as a supporter of apartheid, now in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. The Bank holds over £1 billion in shares in, and provides over £3 billion in loans and underwriting to, 9 companies whose weapons, components, and military technology, are being used by Israel in its attacks on Palestinians.</p> <p>This includes General Dynamics, which produces the gun systems that arm the fighter jets used by Israel to bombard Gaza, and Elbit Systems, which produces armoured drones, munitions and artillery weapons being used now by the Israeli military in both Gaza and the West Bank.</p> <p>The historic ruling at the International Court of Justice at The Hague on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024 means Israel is on trial for genocide and third-party states are liable if they are complicit in, or do not act to prevent, genocide. Specifically, the Genocide Convention has been incorporated into UK law by the International Criminal Court Act of 2001. Barclays, by providing investment and financial services to these arms companies, is liable for supporting acts of genocide and the City Council, by banking with Barclays, is supporting a complicit company.</p>	<p>Cllr Tom Hunt (Leader of the Council &amp; Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee)</p>
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	<p>My questions to the Leader of the Council –</p> <p>Can you give a verbal report now of the due diligence carried out according to the tests and measures against Gross Misconduct in the Council’s ethical procurement policy before the decision was made to renew the Council’s banking contract with Barclays in 2022?</p> <p>Will the Council undertake to review its contractual commitment to Barclays, look at alternative banking options, and in the meantime arrange a meeting with Barclays to explain it will be necessary to change in the light of legal and moral obligations?</p> <p><b>Answers were provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2.00 pm   Sheffield City Council</a></p>	
<p>Michael Mullin (not present at the meeting to ask his questions)</p>	<p><u>South Yorkshire Charity Foundation</u></p> <p>1) Since July 2022, Sheffield City Council (SCC) has committed £850,000 over 3 years through the Shared Prosperity Fund (EU?) and Government to deliver the Sheffield Cost of Living Fund. How much money has Sheffield City Council given to South Yorkshire Charity Foundation (SYCF) in a) July 2022; b) August 2022; c) September 2022; d) October 2022?</p> <p><b>Answer</b> - As set out in a report to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, the Council made a donation of £20,000 to South Yorkshire Community Foundation Cost of Living Fund on 19 Aug 2022. No other payments were made to SYCF in the period specified.</p> <p>On 7 November 2022, the Finance Committee authorised that a further £500,000 be provided to the SYCF Cost of Living Fund from the Shared Prosperity Fund monies delegated to SCC from South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. Subsequently, a further donation to the Foundation was made to enable VCS organisations to apply for capital support for community buildings within the separate Welcome Places Fund that the Foundation administered.</p>	<p>Cllr Tom Hunt (Leader of the Council &amp; Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee)</p>

2) In November 2022, according to the minutes of the Sheffield City Partnership meeting, it said: *“SYCF was approached by SCC a few months ago and they decided to set up a fund”*.

Can Sheffield City Council confirm whether any individual private agreements by Council officers to give public money to SYCF are completely separate to the commitments made in the Sheffield City Partnership meeting of November 2022?

**Answer** - Individual agreements by Council employees to give money to SYCF are private. It is incorrect to state that there have been private agreements by Council employees to give public money to SYCF. This is by definition not public money.

I can confirm that any such private arrangements are completely separate from, and are not connected to, the commitments made by Sheffield City Council.

3) Similarly, can you confirm whether any private agreements by individual Sheffield City Council officers are in anyway contributing to this 850K (the Shared Prosperity Fund via government to Sheffield City Council’s budget to the Sheffield Cost of Living fund)? For example, there has been a personal commitment to give between 95K-150K to SYCF?

**Answer** - The money committed by Sheffield City Council to the SYCF Cost of Living Fund is all either direct SCC resources or Shared Prosperity Fund monies.

4) Who made the decision for Sheffield City Council to set up a fund for SYFC, as discussed at the Sheffield City Partnership meeting in November 2022?

**Answer** - Strategy and Resources Policy Committee made the decision at their meeting on 31 May 2022.

5) As Sheffield City Partnership meetings are not publicised on the Sheffield City Council website, but are usually held in the town hall in ratepayer time, and in ratepayer funded premises, does Sheffield City Council not think it is appropriate

to include these meetings on your calendar as this is part of public money?

**Answer** - Sheffield City Partnership Board meetings are open to the public but they are not part of the Council's formal decision-making arrangements. As such, they are not included on the calendar of meetings on the City Council website. Details of the Board's meetings can be found on its website: [Meetings — Sheffield City Partnership.](#)

The meetings take place in different venues, including the Town Hall. Over the last year, meetings have also taken place in Sheffield Cathedral, SADACCA and ISRAAC. Other venues used in the past include The Circle, Sheffield Hallam University, University of Sheffield and The Sheffield College.

6) I personally know of at least three members who frequently attend Sheffield City Council partnership meetings who are members of the political 'charity' Common Purpose (CP). As the Sheffield City Partnership meetings include senior council employees and senior officers in the public sector, can Sheffield City Council confirm how many of your officers are associated with Common Purpose who have attended them since July 2022?

**Answer** - This is not information that we hold.

#### Lightning Strike

I wish to highlight a statement by a Sheffield City Council officer. In doing so I do not want to publicly name the source for private reasons. I am happy to provide the source to Sheffield City Council in private to help them answer this.

In regards to an 18-year-old dying of the covid vaccine in Sheffield, a council officer said about the likelihood of dying or getting a serious adverse health reaction: ***'in terms of rarity it is like getting struck by lightning territory and vanishingly rare'***.

For the record, it is stated that in the UK between 1987 and 2016, 58 people were known to have been killed by lightning, that is, on average, two people per year. The average annual risk of being struck and killed by lightning was one person in 33 million.



According to the Government's yellow card scheme for the covid vaccine, the total number of reports of suspected reaction with a fatal outcome was 2,579 people with 1,417 of those coming from the AstraZeneca (made in Oxford UK) alone. The victim this council officer was referring to had taken the AstraZeneca vaccine, which as a reminder was claimed to be safe by authorities. The total number of reports of suspected reaction which were serious from AstraZeneca Oxford UK vaccine was 192,823 with just approximately 1-10% of cases reported. These figures have now been updated here.

AstraZeneca click Overview from link

<https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/idaps/CHADOX1%20NCOV-19>

(in the states VAERS data )

<https://openvaers.com/covid-data>

These figures do not include non-fatal or long-term health concerns which are still ongoing. This evidence reveals the chances of dying or getting seriously injured from the covid vaccine is greater than being 'struck by lightning.'

In my view, for this council officer to use the rather unusual and ideological term 'vanishingly rare' was insensitive and reveals a lot about their true mindset towards the issue. Furthermore, the claim its rarity is 'struck by lightning' also in my opinion reveals a lack of focus towards the concern.

Q1. Based on this information, does Sheffield City Council believe the comparison of being 'struck by lightning' when discussing and comparing the covid vaccine deaths and injuries, was a totally disrespectful and inaccurate which clearly does not truly reflect the real danger of the product.

**Answer** - When considering the safety of the Covid vaccination programme, context is important. The covid vaccines have been enormously effective and beneficial across the world.

There is no record of the phrase "struck by lightning" being used in a written answer in response to questions about Covid vaccination, but it isn't disputed that this phrase may have been used verbally.

It is standard practice to try to give comparators that will be meaningful to the public when comparing and

weighing up risks. The phrase 'struck by lightning' is in common use to describe something as exceedingly rare without most people believing that it is intended to be taken as a precise statistical equivalence.

When considering the safety of the Covid vaccination programme, context is important. The covid vaccines have been enormously effective and beneficial across the world.

The cost-benefit balance is heavily in favour of vaccination. The Office for National Statistics (ONS), and others, have previously estimated that up to 26 September 2021, the UK vaccination programme prevented between 23.9 and 24.3 million infections and between 123,600 and 131,300 deaths.

A recent report published by World Health Organization researchers made an estimation of 1.4 million deaths avoided in Europe:  
<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2024.01.12.24301206v1>.

A BMJ editorial neatly rounded up all the evidence of impact [here](#), with a linked research paper from the [USA](#).

ONS have published comprehensive data on this. Here for a 6 month period in 2021:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/deathsinvolvingcovid19byvaccinationstatusengland/deathsoccurringbetween2januaryand2july2021>

This was later updated for a year period:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingcovid19byvaccinationstatusengland/deathsoccurringbetween1january2021and31january2022>

US Centers for Disease Control has a list of publications on COVID vaccine safety, by year of publication, as well as by disease group:  
[https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/research/publications/index.html#anchor\\_1639772389647](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/research/publications/index.html#anchor_1639772389647)

Specifically addressing the substance of the question, no medicines, vaccines included, are 100% safe. This is well set out in many places. However, the questioner has fundamentally misunderstood the Medicines and

Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) yellow card data.

The yellow card data captures deaths associated with vaccination (most often) by proximity in time to covid vaccination rather than deaths caused by covid vaccination. Given the volume, age profiles and coverage of people vaccinated, it is not surprising, but does not represent the number of deaths caused by vaccination.

Thus, the temporal association is not proof of causation. Many of the vaccinated were elderly, so there is a risk of coincidence. There is a good explanation of interpretation of MHRA yellow card data in this ONS blog:

<https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2021/10/04/how-many-people-have-died-as-a-result-of-a-covid-19-vaccine/>

MHRA have published an analysis (2023) of reported covid vaccine adverse reactions and fatalities: [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6408401ed3bf7f564ee6bb35/Coronavirus Vaccine-Summary of Yellow Card reporting autumnupdate DLP20230222.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6408401ed3bf7f564ee6bb35/Coronavirus_Vaccine-Summary_of_Yellow_Card_reporting_autumnupdate_DLP20230222.pdf)

This report states "The MHRA has received 30 UK reports of suspected ADRs with a fatal outcome to the bivalent COVID-19 Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and 42 reports of suspected ADRs with a fatal outcome for the bivalent COVID-19 vaccine Moderna. The MHRA has received no UK reports with a fatal outcome for COVID-19 Vaccine Novavax...".

Obviously, it is important to set that in the context of millions of doses of vaccine, including boosters, given in this time, as set out above.

That 30,000 excess deaths (mainly cardiovascular) have been caused by mRNA vaccines is a common claim. The main source is a well-known anti-vaccination British cardiologist. It is not true. This Reuters fact check is a lay summary:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL1N3490M3/>

The most recent MHRA yellow card analysis can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-adverse-reactions/coronavirus-vaccine-summary-of-yellow-card-reporting#conclusion>.

	<p>The broad conclusion is unchanged.</p> <p>The Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) data has also been well documented to be widely misused and misinterpreted to try to demonstrate similar points. This is well documented in research literature.</p> <p>Q3) It is widely believed that the covid vaccine did not significantly stop transmission. With that considered, can Sheffield City Council please have the self-respect to accept that vaccinating 18 year olds and thousands of children in the city, who according to government statistics, had virtually no risk of dying from the disease covid, was a totally unnecessary and irresponsible act and that this 18-year-old would actually still be alive now?</p> <p><b>Answer</b> - It was never anticipated that the covid vaccination would have a significant impact on transmission, but it does have some impact.</p> <p>UK Health Security Agency have produced multiple technical briefings making estimates of the impact of covid vaccination on transmission, infection, severe illness and death. These are all publicly available.</p> <p>The Council is not vaccinating people. The implementation of all vaccination programmes is by the NHS. The NHS is pursuing a strategy established through a Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation recommendation. This is a strategy that the Council strongly and unequivocally supports. You should redirect your enquiry to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.</p> <p><i>(NB. Another question received from Michael Mullin – his Q2 relating to Lightning Strikes/Covid Vaccine - was not accepted by the Lord Mayor on the grounds that it related to a named officer of the Council.)</i></p>	
<p>Sam Wakeling (not present at the meeting to ask his questions)</p>	<p>In 2019, Sheffield’s Transport Strategy said that responding to the climate crisis is: <i>“not likely to be a question of just more ambition for cycling, cheap bus fares or tram extensions – rather, we anticipate the Climate Emergency is likely to fundamentally challenge, in short order, the degree to which we [the Council] can facilitate [car] travel as we have become accustomed to.”</i></p>	<p>Cllr Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee)</p>

	<p>This scale was pointed to in the Arup report, which also included shifting to electric vehicles, and increasing bus use and active travel, but still relied on a 66% reduction in car use share before 2030 to meet the carbon budget.</p> <p>If we are to ‘talk the city up, not down’ this reduction could be seen better as a chance to dramatically improve the safety of our city’s streets, clean our air, reduce the inequality burden from the richest Sheffields who drive the most, improve the reliability of our buses which get delayed by car traffic, and liberate our streets to prioritise no longer the profits of global vehicle and fuel corporations but instead prioritise the health, freedom and happiness of our children.</p> <p>Yet the 2023 “The way we travel” route map does not include any target for reducing traffic.</p> <p>What scale of car traffic reduction is SCC now planning for?</p> <p><b>Answer</b> - While the ARUP report does advise a 66% reduction in car use may be required to meet our net zero target, this is not adopted as a formal target by the Council.</p> <p>It is important to say that the scale of reduction in car use that might be needed to achieve net zero is dependent on the mix of different measures that are used to decarbonise the whole transport system, through conversion to ultra-low emission vehicles and the provision of safe and accessible alternative travel options such as active travel and public transport. We are also busy improving EV charging infrastructure in the city and I was pleased to visit one of these schemes in Woodhouse with Cllr Rooney last week.</p> <p>A number of strategic activities around transport are currently in progress that relate to Transport targets and priorities. I am particularly looking forward to launching our new Sheffield Transport Vision in March, which will go into detail about many of the points that you have raised today.</p>	
Ada Li	<p><i>(NB. A question received from Ada Li was not accepted by the Lord Mayor on the grounds that it related to a matter not being within the responsibility of the City Council.)</i></p>	

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