

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – 17TH JULY 2024

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE MEETING

1. DEBATE ON A PETITION REQUESTING THE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO SAVE SHEFFIELD'S VITAL FREE THERAPY SERVICE DELIVERED BY SHEFFIELD WOMEN'S CHARITY, VIDA

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Council refers the matter to the Strategic Director of Public Health and Commissioning for further consideration, with a request that he (a) works with Vida Sheffield and with Voluntary Action Sheffield to help develop a sustainable business and financial plan for the Charity; (b) writes to colleagues in the NHS and Integrated Commissioning Board to ensure consideration is given to Vida's work as part of the NHS financial planning round this year; and (c) writes to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to stress the importance of dedicated resources for counselling and therapy for women and girls affected by domestic and sexual abuse.

2. DEBATE NOT HATE

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes two city wide elections have taken place in Sheffield in the last three months and thanks everyone who voted and all those who helped to administer the elections for playing their part in the democratic process;
- (b) believes that debating and respectfully disagreeing with one another is a healthy part of our democracy, but that this cannot cross the line into abuse or intimidation;
- (c) further notes that abuse and toxicity in public and political discourse has a detrimental impact on local democracy and that prevention, support and responses to abuse and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure councillors and Members of Parliament (MPs) feel safe and able to represent their residents;
- (d) notes that female councillors and councillors from minoritised groups and those with other protected characteristics often receive the most abuse and also believes that Sir Keir Starmer must apologise for singling out Bengalis as this fuels further hate towards a minoritised group;

- (e) notes that whilst social media is a valuable tool for councillors to connect with constituents, it has led to the rise of online harassment and abuse directed to elected officials;
- (f) further notes that this online abuse can transcend traditional boundaries into personal spaces 24 hours a day;
- (g) believes that the intimidation and abuse of councillors and MPs, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy, prevents elected members from representing the communities they serve, deters individuals from standing for election, and undermines public life in democratic processes;
- (h) believes that while all intimidation is wrong, elected representatives must be held to the same standards we expect of others and demonstrate civility, honesty and integrity in accordance with the Nolan principles of Standards in Public Life;
- (i) believes politicians should not mis-label robust and legitimate challenges to their policies as hate to avoid accountability;
- (j) believes that an unrepresentative electoral system and laws which stifle protest and dissent help foster an environment of disempowerment, distrust and disengagement;
- (k) notes that The Electoral Commission warned in 2019 that misleading campaign techniques risk undermining trust in elections and in politicians; and
- (l) therefore resolves to:-
 - (i) challenge the normalisation of abuse against politicians and officers and uphold exemplary standards of public and political debate in all it does;
 - (ii) sign up to the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate campaign and calls on each councillor to sign up to the campaign; the campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in local communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the response to and support those in public life facing abuse and intimidation;
 - (iii) work with the LGA to address the abuse and intimidation of local politicians;
 - (iv) ensure the Council has a clear reporting mechanism which councillors can use to monitor and record incidents of harassment and abuse of councillors and officers;
 - (v) regularly review the support available to councillors in relation to abuse and intimidation and councillor safety;
 - (vi) work with the local police to ensure there is a clear and joined-up mechanism for reporting threats and other concerns about the safety of councillors and their families and discuss the need to take a preventative

approach that accounts for the specific risks that councillors face, as they do with other high-risk individuals, like MPs;

- (vii) take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of councillors and officers while protecting freedom of speech of constituents;
- (viii) demonstrate that all political parties agree to be held to the same standard of truthfulness and respect that society expects;
- (ix) ask that the leaders of all groups in the Council co-sign a letter to the Prime Minister asking that political advertising is properly regulated; and
- (x) ask the Chief Executive to sign up corporately to the Debate Not Hate campaign.

3. A HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE EMERGENCY IN SHEFFIELD

RESOLVED: That:-

this Council notes:-

- (a) that the NHS and social care system face multiple crises of access, staff retention, long waiting times, missed targets and poor outcomes;
- (b) that people across Sheffield are struggling to access health and care services;
- (c) that in 2023, almost 900,000 GP appointments in Sheffield took place more than two weeks after booking, representing 24% of all appointments that year;
- (d) that despite this, primary care providers have not been given the funding to employ more GPs, leaving qualified doctors facing unemployment;
- (e) that there is a national dentistry crisis as increasing numbers of practitioners leave the NHS;
- (f) that short staffing of Sheffield Adult Autism and Neurodivergent Service (SAANS) is causing astronomical wait times for ADHD assessments;
- (g) that the Adult Health and Social Care and Education, Children and Families Policy Committees face significant pressure to continue to deliver savings in 2024/25 in the context of increasing demand for services;

- (h) that the Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee overspend in 2023/24 was greatly reduced by one-off government funding, with no guarantee that this will continue in 2024/25;
- (i) that difficulty accessing services increases pressure on acute care such as Accident & Emergency as well as undermining overall population health;

this Council believes:-

- (j) significant public funding is needed to address the crisis in the NHS and Social Care and following the previous Government's spending plans is just a continuation of austerity;
- (k) the only way to reverse the damage caused by previous governments is to stand against the privatisation of our NHS and keep it in public hands; public funding should not be used to finance private profit and shareholders' bonuses;
- (l) there is a crisis in social care nationally, with over 400,000 people awaiting care, reviews, payments or assessment, whilst there are 150,000 staff vacancies in the care sector;

this Council advocates for:-

- (m) cross-party collaboration both locally through the Health and Wellbeing Board and nationally through a long-term agreement on funding and provision of social care;
- (n) greater elected member involvement in developing local healthcare strategies, creating opportunities for experience of communities to be heard and utilised;
- (o) a new national approach to social care, believing successive governments have failed to address the crisis, noting that various political parties have good ideas for consideration, and cross-party working should be encouraged nationally and locally to rise to the challenge;
- (p) the building of a cross-party consensus for longer-term reform needed to create a sustainable National Care Service, supporting the new government's commitment to exploring how best to manage and support an ageing population, working-age disabled adults, meaningful integration with the NHS, and a more preventative system;
- (q) enhanced partnership working across employers, workers, trade unions and government to establish a Fair Pay Agreement in adult social care;
- (r) services locally delivered with a 'home first' principle supporting independent living for as long as possible, standards that ensure high-quality care and ongoing sustainability, and partnerships with responsible providers, and recognises the cross-party work already undertaken by this Council towards such a model;

- (s) further developing local partnership working between NHS and social care to improve hospital discharge and avoidable admissions;
- (t) pro-active recruitment of NHS dentists to tackle 'dentistry deserts' and reform of the dental contract; and welcomes the evidence-gathering underway by this Council's cross-party Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee and Healthwatch to provide a detailed local report on access to NHS dentistry in Sheffield to the Department of Health and Social Care; and
- (u) this Council resolves to call for:-
 - (v) public funding for trusted voluntary sector organisations taking NHS referrals such as domestic abuse counselling services; and
 - (vi) commencement of immediate negotiations on a new NHS dental contract to ensure that dentists are paid properly for their work within the NHS, with a commitment to a firm deadline for rollout.

4. REALLOCATING SOUTH YORKSHIRE MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY FUNDING FROM DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT TO INSULATING HOMES

RESOLVED: That:-

this Council notes:-

- (a) the long standing commitment of this Council to support an airport in South Yorkshire, particularly Doncaster Sheffield Airport;
- (b) that the Mayor of South Yorkshire has been firm in his commitment to reopening the Airport, and trust that he will continue to do so in the coming months;
- (c) the continuing role that manufacturers in South Yorkshire have in producing components for the aviation industry;

this Council believes:-

- (d) that a reopened Doncaster Sheffield Airport is in the long-term interests of the South Yorkshire economy;
- (e) that long distance train travel needs investment in infrastructure and lower prices to make it cheaper than highly subsidised air travel;

- (f) that a rail link for Doncaster Sheffield Airport must be part of any medium-term plans;
- (g) that airlines should be required to show the carbon emissions for domestic flights compared to the equivalent rail option at booking;

this Council resolves:-

- (h) to respect the right of the City of Doncaster Council and its elected Members to make decisions on allocation of their Gainshare funding;
- (i) to call for a reform on aviation taxes to focus on frequent flyers, while reducing costs for ordinary households who take one or two international return flights per year;

this Council:-

- (j) is committed to regional economic growth and notes that re-opening Doncaster-Sheffield Airport would significantly boost the regional economy, create 3,000-4,500 jobs directly, and thousands more in indirect and catalyst roles across various sectors;
- (k) believes that reopening the Airport would create an internationally significant, sustainable aviation and advanced manufacturing hub at Gateway East in Doncaster, and notes that the Airport would form a key part of the South Yorkshire Investment Zone;
- (l) believes that South Yorkshire's expertise in advanced manufacturing means that our region is well placed to help to develop green aviation technologies;
- (m) believes that collaboration between industry and academia on sustainable aviation fuels, electric and hybrid propulsion systems, and lightweight materials, can position the region as a leader in green aviation; and
- (n) supports the re-opening of Doncaster-Sheffield Airport.

5. BUILDING HOMES AND BETTER MANAGING HOUSING STOCK TO DEAL WITH THE HOUSING EMERGENCY AND IMPROVE LIVES OF SHEFFIELD CITIZENS

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes research published by Shelter, which states that:-

- (i) between April 2023 and April 2024, 26,000 social rent homes in England have been lost through demolition or purchase;
 - (ii) over 145,800 children are currently in temporary accommodation due to homelessness;
 - (iii) landlords are converting their homes into affordable rent housing, which is not social rent housing; and
 - (iv) in the financial year 2022-23, there was a net loss of 11,684 social rent homes in England;
- (b) notes that Sheffield mirrors this picture:-
- (i) between April 2014 and April 2023, the number of Sheffield City Council owned and managed homes declined from 41,059 to 38,470;
 - (ii) in the financial year 2023-24 the main homelessness duty was owed to 843 households, and there were 765 households in temporary accommodation as of 20th June 2024;
 - (iii) at the same time, applicants are advised to seek private rental homes, incurring higher costs which are unaffordable for many; the average private rent was £850 per month last December, compared to an average social rent of £358 for the last financial year;
 - (iv) the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024-25, which was presented to Full Council in February 2024, acknowledges that the city has a shortage of 902 homes and anticipates a further loss of stock each year; it contains no clear targets for building, investment or acquisition during 2024-25 and, in the absence of a 10-year housing strategy, says that a partnership approach will be required; and
 - (v) a recent report by the Regulator of Social Housing shows the City Council has failed to meet their new consumer standards and “does not have an accurate record of the condition of tenants’ homes”;
- (c) believes that this commitment is not sufficiently clear, demonstrates a lack of ambition and, put simply, lets the people of Sheffield down;
- (d) believes that council housing is a vital public service we should be proud of;
- (e) notes that the New Economic Foundation has reported that private landlords are set to receive £70 billion in subsidy through housing benefit in five years (2021-26);
- (f) notes this Council is one of the 20 largest local authority landlords in England which signed the recent “Securing the Future of Council Housing” report, with 23 recommendations as urgent solutions to solve the crisis in council housing;
- (g) notes the proposals put forward to government include:-

- (i) a fair and sustainable model for Housing Revenue Account funding;
 - (ii) ending the Right to Buy for new council house-building;
 - (iii) an immediate cash injection of £644 million;
 - (iv) a new, long-term Green and Decent Homes programme to bring all council housing up to the new standard of safety, decency and energy efficiency by 2030; and
 - (v) funding to complete stalled council house-building schemes, such as the Gleadless Valley masterplan regeneration;
- (h) believes that government should support all these solutions not only because they are what our tenants and residents need and deserve but also because they support the economy, improve wellbeing and reduce the demand on other public services;
- (i) calls upon central government to restrict the Right to Buy, in order to protect its investment in social housing and the wellbeing of its citizens;
- (j) resolves to ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to implement a ten-year housing emergency upgrade programme with free insulation for those on low incomes;
- (k) resolves to ask the Housing Policy Committee to consider managing remaining properties effectively by:-
- (i) reviewing and managing tenancies appropriately where reports of empty homes are received;
 - (ii) bringing void properties, regardless of their management arrangements across the Council portfolio, back into use as soon as possible;
 - (iii) promoting a system whereby properties can be pre-allocated on receipt of notice in order to minimise lost income and prevent damage and vandalism whilst vacant;
 - (iv) urgently addressing the 10,000 outstanding repairs across its homes;
 - (v) setting clear and transparent targets to reduce the backlog of repairs, making better use of the 31% increase in budget in the last two years; and
 - (vi) allowing tenants to directly employ an approved contractor where repairs have not been carried out in appropriate time;
- (l) also resolves to ask the Housing Policy Committee to consider investing in retrofitting existing homes on the basis of 'worst first', to create sustainable and desirable homes;

- (m) further resolves to ask the Housing Policy Committee to consider building new homes for rent at social rent levels, enabling the regeneration of whole communities as a result;
- (n) notes that public consultation is underway on a new 10-year housing strategy to enable all of our communities to have access to the right homes and neighbourhoods to meet their needs;
- (o) notes that this strategy will not only cover social housing, but also relates to privately owned and privately rented housing;
- (p) notes that Sheffield is experiencing high demand for housing but that the Council is taking steps to increase housing growth in the city, including the Council's commitment to build and acquire an extra 1,012 council homes within 5 years, making sites available for housing associations and our work to develop three new city centre neighbourhoods;
- (q) welcomes the aims of the newly elected government to deliver the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation; and
- (r) welcomes, furthermore, the Government's stated commitment to building new social rented homes and to better protect existing stock by reviewing right to buy discounts introduced and increasing protections on newly-built social housing.

6. ORDER OF NOTICES OF MOTION AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

RESOLVED: That:-

- (a) further to Council Procedure Rule 10.2, and having regard to the fact that the order for this meeting had been determined as Labour / Lib Dem / Green / Sheffield Community Councillors, the order in which Notices of Motion shall be listed on the Summons for the remaining five ordinary meetings of the Council in the Municipal Year 2024-25 shall be as follows:-
 - 4 September 2024 – LibDem / Green / Labour / Labour / Cllr Al-Ahdal
 - 2 October 2024 – Labour / LibDem / Labour / LibDem
 - 6 November 2024 – Green / Labour / LibDem / Labour
 - 4 December 2024 – LibDem / Labour / Labour / LibDem
 - 5 February 2025 – Labour / Sheff Community Councillors / LibDem / Green

- (b) requests that following liaison with Group Whips, the Monitoring Officer brings back a report to the next Full Council meeting suggesting any amendments to the Council Procedure Rules to provide for a more precise and unambiguous definition of how individual motions that are not submitted through the recognised groups should be accommodated within the formula for the order of notice of motions, as well as providing different options regarding formulas.

7. PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY FOR MEMBERS

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That this Council:-

- (a) approves the Parental Leave Policy for Members, attached as an appendix to the report of the Director of People and Organisational Culture, and agrees that it be added to the Constitution as an Appendix to the Members' Allowances Scheme at Part 6; and
- (b) approves that maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave taken under this Policy is an approved reason under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 without needing the further approval of the Council.

8. CHANGES TO THE REMIT OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That, as recommended by Governance Committee, this Council:-

- (a) approves that the Finance Committee be re-established as a Finance and Performance Policy Committee, retaining the same membership; and
- (b) approves the changes to Part 3.3.1 of the Constitution (Matters Delegated to Policy Committees), as outlined in the report to Governance Committee and as set out in the Appendix to that report.