

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Thursday 21 December 2023 by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee.

Item No

6. **EQUALITY FRAMEWORK – EQUALITY IS EVERYONE’S BUSINESS**

- 6.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement submitted a report proposing a new draft Equality Framework for Sheffield City Council, to include the Council’s proposed ambitions relating to equality, diversity and inclusion for the next four years as we seek to fulfil the vision set out in the Council Plan of becoming an organisation that puts people at the heart of what we do. By taking the learning from the Race Equality Commission and elsewhere, this framework fundamentally repositions the organisation’s approach to equality, diversity and inclusion over the next four years.

At the heart of the Equality Framework are the proposed new statutory Equality Objectives for Sheffield City Council. These will sit alongside the outcomes agreed in the Council Plan to provide a clear focus to our work on EDI. The Equality Objectives are focused around our three core roles in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, namely:

- City and community leadership: championing equality through knowledgeable and inspirational leadership, and building a fairer Sheffield by fostering good relationships, listening, and engaging with the city’s diverse communities and together becoming an anti-racist city
- Service provider: providing supportive, accessible and customer centred services which increasingly understand and meet the needs of all Sheffield’s communities.
- Employer: Further developing a culture where employees feel safe, valued and have a sense of belonging, where equality is everyone’s business, and by building a representative and highly skilled workforce which reflects the city’s diversity

- 6.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) endorses the draft Equality Framework;

(b) agrees the draft Equality Objectives as set out within the Framework, subject to public consultation;

(c) agrees to proceed with public consultation on the Equality Framework and Equality Objectives and bring to this committee a further report following that consultation;

(d) agrees that the further report will include detailed action plans for each Objective setting out how they will be achieved; and

(e) notes that in line with a recent Council motion, and the recent decisions taken by the Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 13 December 2023, care experience (those who have at any part in their childhood been part of the care system) will be treated as an equality characteristic by the council in situations where protected characteristics are considered (including, but not limited to, equality impact assessments).

6.3 Reasons for Decision

6.3.1 It is recommended that Strategy and Resources Committee approve the equality framework as it will support the fundamental repositioning of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion work in line with the ambitions of the council plan and our work to embed anti-racism within the organisation and the city. By agreeing the framework, the committee will also ensure that we meet our statutory obligation to publish a set of four-year equality objectives.

6.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

6.4.1 The Council has previously agreed that it should pursue a specific approach to equality rather than one where equality is 'mainstreamed' within other activity. Because of the importance given to equality, diversity and inclusion within the draft City Goals and Council Plan this report does not recommend a change to that approach. Furthermore, there is a statutory requirement for the council to adopt a set of Equality Objectives, as proposed in this Framework. As such no alternative options have been considered.

7. RACE EQUALITY IN OUR COUNCIL

7.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement submitted a report providing the Council with a holistic, future-facing approach to race equality. Building on the progress already made, it sets out in part 1 what we stand for as a Council and in part 2 where we are as an organisation, including on the 7 qualities the Race Equality Commission (REC) said an anti-racist organisation would have in place as a minimum. Part 3 sets out the action we will now take, illustrated with work which has already taken place. This report responds to feedback encouraging the Council to take ownership, implement action with more pace and make clear what race equality means to us as an organisation and what our approach will be.

The REC published its final report on 14 July 2022. Commissioned by elected members, chaired by Professor Emeritus Kevin Hylton and supported by 24 commissioners, the REC gave Sheffield an account of race equality in the city and a set of recommendations for areas requiring improvement.

Sheffield City Council made the promise set out in the REC report and in doing so agreed to implement the recommendations which were relevant to the Council, become an anti-racist organisation and facilitate the formation of a

legacy body. The Council responded to the REC in December 2022, bringing to this Committee an action plan to address the recommendations. In August, this Committee reviewed progress and committed to go further, faster.

7.2 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) agrees to adopt part 1 (pages 4-5) of the report now submitted and support and challenge officers, partners and each other, in a spirit of joint endeavour and kindness, so that everyone aligns what they do and how they do it against shared statements of intent;

(b) through this report, and in individual letters of thanks, formally acknowledge the Race Equality Commission, its independent Chair and its 24 commissioners, including Council staff members who took on commissioner roles alongside their work, and those who supported them (paragraphs 22-24);

(c) notes part 2 of the report (pages 6-14) which sets out data on race in our city and our progress against the 7 qualities the REC said an anti-racist organisation would have in place as a minimum;

(d) agrees the actions in part 3 (pages 15-29) and champion the report's aims across the Council's policy committees, and across the breadth of the Council's committee system, and ask the Governance Committee to support the implementation of this approach;

(e) agrees that elected members on key committees will be the first tranche of members to undertake an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) level 2 equivalent certificate (paragraph 35e);

(f) agrees the accountability roles and responsibilities (paragraphs 43-44);

(g) notes the substantial, positive work of the legacy body task and finish group and extend gratitude to its chair, members and those who have supported its work (paragraphs 45-48); and

(h) approves the Council budget of £100,000 over four years, earmarked in the 2024/25 Business Planning to fund internal spend on the Council's external contribution to work around the Race Equality Partnership for Sheffield (paragraphs 49-52).

7.3 Reasons for Decision

7.3.1 To build on progress to date and provide the Council with the next stepping stone in the on-going journey towards race equality.

7.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

7.4.1 This Committee agreed that the Council should pursue a specific approach to race equality. This report does not recommend a change to that approach.

8. STREET TREE INQUIRY PROGRESS REPORT

8.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement submitted a report providing an update on progress made towards the actions agreed as part of the Council's response to the Independent Street Tree Inquiry, as agreed at the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee meeting on 19 June 2023. It highlights the work done to date to deliver the agreed actions and sets out proposed next steps.

8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) notes the progress made towards the actions agreed in the June 2023 'Learning from the past and moving ahead: response to the Sheffield Street Tree Inquiry' report, as detailed in the report now submitted;

(b) agrees the proposed next steps, as set out at paragraph 1.33 of this report; and

(c) agrees to receive a further report in July 2024 on progress towards the recommendations agreed in the June 2023 report.

8.3 Reasons for Decision

8.3.1 By agreeing the recommendations, the committee will ensure that continued progress is made towards achieving the recommendations of the Street Tree Inquiry. This is a critical part of the journey of rebuilding the trust and confidence of our communities following the street tree dispute and will support the achievement of our Council Plan ambitions in this area.

8.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

8.4.1 This report was produced in accordance with the Strategy and Resources Committee's decision of 18 June 2023, requesting an update on progress made towards the recommendations made in the Sheffield Street Tree Inquiry report. The only alternative option would have been not to produce an update report, which has been discounted.

9. IDENTIFYING THE FUTURE ROLE OF CENTRAL LIBRARY AND GRAVES GALLERY BUILDING

9.1 The Executive Director City Futures submitted a report containing a proposed way forward for the future of the Central Library/Graves Gallery building, with potential timeline, for Member discussion and approval.

Central Library/Graves Gallery building is a beloved Sheffield landmark which needs to be reimagined for the future. Members need good information on the feasibility of various options for its future, to help decide a way forward.

Integral to this process are:

- A vision and location for Central Library and Archive services.
- A vision and feasibility for the future use of the building, as a nationally significant destination gallery.

Resources for repair surveys are required immediately to allow a repair programme to be designed and costed, and progress made as options are considered.

9.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) approves the process of exploring the options for the future of the Central Library/Graves Gallery building, as set out in the report, including:

- Further work to understand the full extent of the Central Library building's condition
- Development of a vision for a 21st Century Central Library and Archives including options for how and where this could be located
- Development of the vision and work to assess the viability of transforming Central Library/Graves building into a nationally significant destination gallery;

(b) approves the use of reserves of £420k to fund initial surveying costs, to begin facilitation of an interim repair programme to be designed and costed;

(c) notes a request for funding to be identified to support further design costs as well as a financial model to support identified investment in the Building as part of the Accommodation Strategy;

(d) notes the interdependencies with the City Centre Accommodation Strategy;

(e) notes the potential outline timeline for the activities, including a further report in June 2024;

(f) notes that Place Feasibility Funding is being sought to support the options/visioning activity in Recommendation (a); and

(g) endorses the development of a public engagement plan for the elements of this project

9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

9.3.1 The recommendation above set out a process and indicative timescale for gaining the in-depth information needed to inform future decisions on the Central Library/Graves Gallery.

Without this additional information, Members will not be able to make a well-grounded decision.

There is real urgency for the future of this Sheffield landmark to be secured, with the potential for exciting options for future gallery and library development. However, the financial, operational and service provision implications need to be fully understood.

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

9.4.1 Other options have been considered but are not recommended:

- Do nothing – which would have consequences for health and safety, would lead to the building's closure, and would incur costs in keeping the building secure.
- Take a decision without the feasibility work.
- Members have already made clear that they do not wish to vacate the building and market it as a development opportunity

9.4.2 By commissioning additional information and survey work to inform the long-term development of the Central Library/Graves Gallery, Members will have the best opportunity to make a sound choice on the future of the building. Without this additional information it will be difficult to make an appropriate choice; therefore, an alternative option is not being considered.

10. **WHOLE COUNCIL BUDGET UPDATE AND DELIVERY OPTIONS**

10.1 The Director of Finance and Commercial Services submitted a report outlining the progress to date from each Policy Committee in delivering a balanced budget for 2024/25 and to note the budget proposals for the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee. Details of the Government's local government funding settlement, announced earlier in the week, were provided and the implications on the budget were set out.

10.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) notes the budget proposals presented to the Policy Committees, as detailed in the report now submitted;

(b) notes that action is required by those Committees not presenting a balance position; and

(c) notes this Committee's initial response for budget proposals, as set out in this report, including Part B.

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

10.3.1 The recommendations in this report sets out the next steps to deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25 and the HRA housing rents.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 10.4.1 The Council is required by law to deliver a balance budget and therefore each Committee needs to delivery savings to achieve this. No alternatives have been considered at this stage.

11. **UPDATE ON PROPOSED AGREEMENT FOR LEASE OF THE FORMER COLES BUILDING**

- 11.1 The Executive Director City Futures submitted a report updating Members on the current position with regard to the proposed agreement for lease of the former Cole Brothers store in Barkers Pool and seeking approval to enter into an agreement with Urban Splash.

- 11.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) notes the current position and progress on the proposed agreement for the lease of the former Cole Brothers store in Barkers Pool since the last report to Committee; and

(b) agrees that the Council should now progress to finalising the Agreement for Lease as set out in Part 2 of the report now submitted.

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 11.3.1 The proposed Agreement to Urban Splash will result in the delivery of an exciting mixed-use scheme comprising flexible workspace and cafes/retail/leisure/cultural uses/event space which are all considered to be complementary uses to the rest of the Heart of the City project. The development will create space for new jobs, places to shop, eat and visit and will help to increase the vibrancy and attractiveness of the city centre for residents and visitors.

- 11.3.2 Urban Splash has a strong track record of working with many public sector parties. The proposed project team have redeveloped many challenging and listed buildings, including both historic and post-war structures and have expertise in engaging communities in redevelopment and delivering programmes of meanwhile use.

- 11.3.3 Bringing this vacant listed building back into active use will be hugely beneficial both for the wider city centre and the surrounding Heart of the City Scheme. Retaining the large majority of the structure, whilst improving the thermal performance and energy efficiency of the building, should have a positive impact on climate change.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 11.4.1 As stated in the previous reports to this Committee in August 22 and in March and June 23, the Council could decide not to progress with a disposal of the

building at the present time. However, to do so would lead to further delays and uncertainty around what is an important building for the regeneration of the city centre and possibly reputational damage to the city's image from many people both within and outside of Sheffield.

- 11.4.2 Retaining the building without securing its redevelopment will have financial implications for the Council both in vacant property management, security and holding costs and in potential blight suppressing values and interest in the surrounding property and the Heart of the City scheme