

# Agenda Item 15

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of the City of Sheffield held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH, on Wednesday 7 February 2024, at 2.00 pm, pursuant to notice duly given and Summonses duly served.

## PRESENT

THE LORD MAYOR (Councillor Colin Ross)  
THE DEPUTY LORD MAYOR (Councillor Jayne Dunn)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 <i>Beauchief &amp; Greenhill Ward</i><br>Simon Clement-Jones<br>Richard Shaw<br>Sophie Thornton | 10 <i>East Ecclesfield Ward</i><br>Craig Gamble Pugh<br>Robert Reiss<br>Alan Woodcock     | 19 <i>Nether Edge &amp; Sharrow Ward</i><br>Nighat Basharat<br>Maroof Raouf<br>Ibby Ullah |
| 2 <i>Beighton Ward</i><br>Kurtis Crossland<br>Ian Horner<br>Ann Woolhouse                         | 11 <i>Ecclesall Ward</i><br>Roger Davison<br>Barbara Masters<br>Shaffaq Mohammed          | 20 <i>Park &amp; Arbourthorne</i><br>Ben Miskell<br>Nabeela Mowlana<br>Sophie Wilson      |
| 3 <i>Birley Ward</i><br>Denise Fox<br>Bryan Lodge<br>Karen McGowan                                | 12 <i>Firth Park Ward</i><br>Fran Belbin<br>Abtisam Mohamed                               | 21 <i>Richmond Ward</i><br>David Barker<br>Mike Drabble<br>Dianne Hurst                   |
| 4 <i>Broomhill &amp; Sharrow Vale Ward</i><br>Angela Argenzio<br>Brian Holmshaw                   | 13 <i>Fulwood Ward</i><br>Sue Alston<br>Andrew Sangar<br>Cliff Woodcraft                  | 22 <i>Shiregreen &amp; Brightside Ward</i><br>Dawn Dale<br>Peter Price                    |
| 5 <i>Burngreave Ward</i><br>Talib Hussain<br>Mark Jones<br>Safiya Saeed                           | 14 <i>Gleadless Valley Ward</i><br>Alexi Dimond<br>Marieanne Elliot<br>Paul Turpin        | 23 <i>Southey Ward</i><br>Tony Damms<br>Jayne Dunn  |
| 6 <i>City Ward</i><br>Douglas Johnson<br>Ruth Mersereau<br>Martin Phipps                          | 15 <i>Graves Park Ward</i><br>Ian Auckland<br>Steve Ayris<br>Mohammed Mahroof             | 24 <i>Stannington Ward</i><br>Penny Baker<br>William Sapwell<br>Richard Williams          |
| 7 <i>Crookes &amp; Crosspool Ward</i><br>Tim Huggan<br>Ruth Milsom<br>Minesh Parekh               | 16 <i>Hillsborough Ward</i><br>Christine Gilligan Kubo<br>Toby Mallinson<br>Henry Nottage | 25 <i>Stocksbridge &amp; Upper Don Ward</i><br>Julie Grocutt<br>Janet Ridler              |
| 8 <i>Darnall Ward</i><br>Mary Lea<br>Zahira Naz   | 17 <i>Manor Castle Ward</i><br>Terry Fox<br>Sioned-Mair Richards                          | 26 <i>Walkley Ward</i><br>Tom Hunt<br>Bernard Little<br>Laura McClean                     |
| 9 <i>Dore &amp; Totley Ward</i><br>Colin Ross<br>Martin Smith                                     | 18 <i>Mosborough Ward</i><br>Glynis Chapman<br>Tony Downing<br>Gail Smith                 | 27 <i>West Ecclesfield Ward</i><br>Alan Hooper<br>Mike Levery<br>Ann Whitaker             |
|   |   | 28 <i>Woodhouse Ward</i><br>Mick Rooney<br>Paul Wood                                      |

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Chaplin, Lewis Chinchen, Maleiki Haybe, Mazher Iqbal, Abdul Khayum, Laura Moynahan, Alison Norris, Joe Otten and Garry Weatherall.
- 1.2 The Lord Mayor (Councillor Colin Ross) stated that he wished to make mention of the absence of Councillor Alison Norris who had been injured during a recent tragic incident in the Burngreave area of the city, and he offered the best wishes of the Council for her speedy recovery. Additionally, he reported that the wife of the victim of the attack, Chris Marriott, was a Council Officer and he expressed condolences, on behalf of the Council, to the Marriott family.

## **2. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

- 2.1 There were no items of business identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 3.1 Councillor Minesh Parekh declared a personal interest in item 10 on the agenda (Notice of Motion regarding “Five Years Since Declaring A Climate Emergency”) (item 9 of these minutes) on the grounds that one of the proposed amendments contains a reference to his employer, Olivia Blake MP.

## **4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS**

### **4.1 Lord Mayor’s Announcements**

- 4.1.1 The Lord Mayor (Councillor Colin Ross) reported that he had visited the Winter Gardens earlier that day to see young people performing, in advance of the MOBO (Music of Black Origin) awards which were being held that evening in the city. He stated that this major event in the city had engaged many sectors of the community, including schools, and it had been a pleasure to be involved.
- 4.1.2 The Lord Mayor also reported that celebrations marking the Lunar New Year on 10th February, would be taking place in the city over the coming weekend, including a Dragon Parade from the Town Hall on Monday.
- 4.1.3 He concluded his announcements by reporting that there would be a fashion show taking place in the Town Hall on 22nd March in support of the Lord Mayor’s charity.

#### 4.2 Petitions and Public Questions

The Lord Mayor (Councillor Colin Ross) reported that one petition was to be received at the meeting and questions would be taken from 19 members of the public.

#### 4.3 Petition : Calling on the Council to Create a Dedicated BAMER Community Infrastructure Fund

4.3.1 The Council received a joint paper and electronic petition containing 1,129 signatures calling on the Council to act on Race Equality by creating a dedicated BAMER (Black, Asian Minority Ethnic and Refugee Organisations) Community Infrastructure Fund.

4.3.2 Representations on behalf of the petitioners were made by Emily Wilson, who explained that she had worked on the petition with Geoff Green, Emeritus Professor of Urban Policy, and with the CEOs of the five leading black and ethnic minority led organisations in the city, with a view to establishing the provision of council funds to support equity-led community infrastructure, which aimed to enable communities to solve problems within their community themselves.

Ms Wilson advised that previous engagement with the Council on this had been unsuccessful, but she felt that it was time to use the assets that the city had to build more cost effective, equitable and resilient models of community infrastructure, and it was particularly important that the Council listen to local communities in the wake of the Race Equality Report. She concluded by saying that the Council should stop being a gatekeeper to funding and act as a connector and convenor for the city, focussing on enabling civic voice and power.

4.3.3 The petition was referred to Councillor Tom Hunt (the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee) to respond. Councillor Hunt offered his thanks to everyone who had signed and worked on the petition, and stated that he would do all he could to eradicate racism within the city.

Councillor Hunt explained that the Council was looking at how it supported and engaged with the city's diverse voluntary and community sector and faith organisations, with the aim of improvement, so engagement was consistent, and included organisations who felt that they did not get their voice heard or have equitable access to the Council and its resources. He advised that the Council had agreed to publish more information on who it contracts with and gives grants to.

Councillor Hunt emphasised that he recognised the important and valuable work that BAMER groups did in the city, and he wanted to ensure that they had equitable access to funding to help support their work, as outlined in the Race Equality Commission report. He had asked Officers to consider the issues

raised by the petition and he would also ask that a report be taken to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, ideally in March. Councillor Hunt added that he would ensure that BAMER organisations were involved and engaged in any proposed changes, and he was meeting with the 5 main organisations on 21st February.

4.3.4 The Council noted the petition and response from the Leader of the Council.

#### 4.4 Public Questions

##### 4.4.1 Question from Val Wilson

*Question - I need to remind you 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. I hope you still have it in mind.*

In response, Councillor Douglas Johnson (Chair of the Housing Policy Committee) stated that he recalled Ms Wilson's previous visit to Council, where she had asked for a plaque on her bungalow. The matter had been referred to the ward councillors for the area and he understood that they were in discussions with the local housing office, and that she should hear further on the matter shortly.

##### 4.4.2 Questions from Ruth Hubbard

*Questions - 1. It's the beginning of February and very soon I'm aware we will start to see what is for many the unedifying spectacle of the lead up to local elections and the grab for local power. We sadly remain firmly behind the curve in moving towards more appropriate election cycles.*

*Can I firstly request the approximate cost to the Council of running an annual round of local elections.*

*I am also concerned with the conduct of free and fair elections. Last year the actions of one candidate - without revealing they were a candidate but using a position of political authority - necessitated police intervention from specialist harassment officers. This was because of the candidate's intimidating messages to a community group who simply sought to share legitimate local election information to their local community. Can I please confirm with the Leader that there will not be a repeat of any such behaviour by any candidate this year; his commitment to free and fair local elections; and the rights of community groups to freedom of expression, including their right to share information.*

*2. I have been tracking the Council's follow up to the Fargate container project. A partially redacted Internal Audit (IA) Report has been received at Audit and Standards Committee that identified a catalogue of failures in procurement processes, management of the contractor, governance and*

*planning controls, decision making, financial controls and monitoring, stakeholder engagement and communication and risk management.*

*There is a clear public interest in elected members exercising explicit and committed oversight over how council systems operate and to try to prevent similar episodes recurring. However, the Audit and Standards Committee has chosen - twice now - not to endorse the recommendations and actions identified in the IA report on the adjustments being made within the Council.*

*The problem for some members of Audit and Standards Committee seems to be that they really want to be able to put more emphasis on who was responsible and, in particular, the political context in pushing through decisions on the project. There is also a public interest here of course. Whilst it has 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 and accountability. 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.*

*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.*

*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 public 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?*

In response, Councillor Tom Hunt (the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee) stated that, regarding the first question regarding local elections, the cost of running elections fluctuated each year depending on their precise pattern, and on whether they were combined with other government-funded elections such as the Police and Crime Commissioner elections. Costs had also been increasing with the impact of inflation. However, with those caveats, he could confirm that the cost to the Council of a standalone city council election was around £940,000.

In response to the point regarding behaviour, Councillor Hunt stated that as Leader of the Council he expected all candidates and agents, from all parties, to behave in a lawful and respectful manner. He advised that in Sheffield there was a history of positive, respectful campaigning and he hoped that would continue.

Councillor Hunt explained that each year the Returning Officer supported this process by inviting all election candidates and agents to an online briefing. Amongst the topics covered were the law covering election campaigning and the specific offences that can occur; the Electoral Commission code of conduct for campaigners; and the role of South Yorkshire Police in investigating any breach of elections law in respect of the campaign. Candidates and agents were asked by the Returning Officer to abide by the code of conduct and to report any issues during the campaign to the Returning Officer and, if they believed an offence may have been committed, to South Yorkshire Police.

The second question regarding the Fargate Container Project was answered by Councillor Mohammed Mahroof (Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee), who stated that at its meeting on 1st February, the Audit and Standards Committee had noted the findings and recommendations of the Internal Audit report into the containers project. In particular, it noted that all 14 critical recommendations identified by Internal Audit had been implemented and were now 'green' on the audit tracker report. He emphasised that it was important that the Council was open and transparent at all times, particularly when things went wrong.

Councillor Mahroof continued by explaining that the Audit and Standards Committee had carried out its functions properly and responsibly, recognising that its primary responsibility was in ensuring that the Council's governance and control arrangements were working properly, and providing oversight of the Council's risk management arrangements. He stated that wider issues of service performance were for the relevant policy committee, and for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee in its overall corporate role. The effectiveness of the Council's oversight and scrutiny arrangements was for Governance Committee to consider, and to make recommendations to Full Council.

#### 4.4.3 Question from Isobel O'Leary

*Question - 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?*

In response, Councillor Tom Hunt (the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee) stated that in his view, Sir Mark Lowcock's report into the street tree dispute was clear, that the Council's strategy at the time of taking out injunctions was ineffective in deterring protestors or resolving opposition to the Streets Ahead programme. He added that as well as failing to resolve the dispute, relying on legal solutions had

caused the Council wider reputational damage, as well as costing a significant amount of money that could have been used to fund compromise solutions for street trees.

Councillor Hunt concluded that the Council has learnt from experience that a collaborative, respectful, but appropriately challenging partnership approach, based on mutual trust and understanding had delivered more for the city and its street trees, than was achieved through four years of dispute.

4.4.4 Question from Dave Dilner

*Question - 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 by the Lowcock Report?*

In response, Councillor Tom Hunt (the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee) stated that Sir Mark Lowcock was clear in his report that the Council's behaviour during the dispute amounted to a serious and sustained failure of strategic leadership at both political and officer level. Councillor Hunt added that the Council had apologised publicly on a number of occasions for that failure of leadership and for the harms that were caused, and individual apologies had also been issued. He explained that none of the politicians or senior officers who were in post at that time remained in positions of responsibility in the Authority. The Council had been clear throughout that it had no power to hold former employees directly to account or to require them to apologise for what happened during the dispute, and that similarly, elected Members cannot be compelled to resign. He stated that the ballot box was the mechanism for voters to hold their elected representatives to account.

4.4.5 Question from Justin Buxton (asked at the meeting by Mark James)

*Question - 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?*

*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 Streets Ahead contract .... did not have any bearing upon the resultant judgements referred to - as the solicitors engaged apparently believe and advised?*

In response, Councillor Tom Hunt (the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee) confirmed that the Council did not seek a barrister's advice, and had not seen the advice that was given to Sir Mark's Inquiry, other than the conclusions that were published in the Inquiry

Report. He added that the Council's General Counsel had considered the point himself prior to the apology being made.

4.4.6 Question from Lynne Chapman

Question - *What steps will be taken this year to make bus travel more attractive to the Sheffield public?*

In response, Councillor Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee) stated that he was excited about the year ahead as, together with Mayor Oliver Coppard, there were plans to bring the buses and trams back under public control. Trams would be brought back under public control on 22nd March.

Councillor Miskell added that, in his view, the region had been getting a rough deal from government in relation to buses. This was because, since bus deregulation in the 1980s, South Yorkshire's bus network had been run by private companies, who chose when to run services, what services to keep going, and how much to charge for fares. This meant that decisions on whether to cut services and let down passengers, were taken by private operators.

Councillor Miskell explained that fares had risen by 51%, which was almost twice as fast as wages since 2010, which put high pressure on passengers, and more than 15% of South Yorkshire bus services had been cut in the last year. He stated that, in his view, this was what a deregulated bus system looked like, which was why he was working to change it.

Councillor Miskell also stated that the Mayoral Combined Authority was going through an assessment process for a bus franchising scheme for Sheffield and South Yorkshire which would bring regulation of bus routes, frequencies, fares, and tickets under local public control, as Greater Manchester had done under Labour leadership. He added that, whilst he couldn't prejudge the decision, the work was being done as quickly as possible. Additionally, Councillor Miskell advised that, in January, a bid had been issued to the Government as part of ZEBRA 2, which was a pot of funding which could deliver 65 electric buses in Sheffield.

Councillor Miskell concluded by saying that he was excited for the year ahead and hopeful for a General Election soon and the possibility of a Labour government that would rejuvenate public transport in Sheffield and the region.

4.4.7 Questions from Hilary Smith

Questions - *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.*

*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.*

*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.*

*Will Sheffield Council 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?*

*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?*

In response, Councillor Tom Hunt, (the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee) stated that a positive and constructive conversation had taken place a few weeks previously when Ms Smith and other members of the Sheffield Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid had met with himself, senior officers and Members.

Councillor Hunt advised that he fully recognised the significant concerns Ms Smith and others continue to raise about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. He had heard these concerns directly when he visited the "Justice Now" demonstration held outside the Town Hall in January and spoke with protesters. He explained that a report was due to be submitted to the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on 21st February, which would provide an update regarding the Council's actions relating to the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine and this would be informed by his discussion with the group on 19th January. He was also keen to have a further meeting with the group before the Committee's meeting.

With regards to South Yorkshire Pension Authority (SYPA), Councillor Hunt stated that he needed to be clear that the Council did not administer or have any direct influence over how the pension funds were invested. The funds belonged to the employees and ex-employees, who were members of the pension scheme, and the scheme was administered on their behalf by SYPA.

Councillor Hunt added that members of the Pensions Authority, have to act in the best financial interest of members and beneficiaries of the pension scheme at all times when they are acting in their capacity as members of the Pensions Authority. Although the Pensions Authority Members were appointed by the Council, they were not representatives of the Council, and the Council could not direct or influence how Members of the Pension Authority took decisions relating to the administration and management of the pension fund. Those Members had a responsibility to follow the requirements set out in various pieces of legislation and, independent of their position on the Council, had to make their decisions based on what they felt was genuinely in the best interest of the pension fund.

#### 4.4.8 Question from Val Johnson

*Question - After the ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), 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 (i.e. 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?*

In response, Councillor Tom Hunt, (the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee) stated that a report was due to be submitted to the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on 21st February, which would provide an update regarding the Council’s actions relating to the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine. This report would be informed by a recent meeting with the Sheffield Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid.

Councillor Hunt continued that the ICJ’s interim ruling set out urgent provisional measures that, in his view, must be followed. He felt it imperative that Israel comply with the orders of this ruling in full, and he supported those pressing for these orders to be implemented. He stated that he had been clear throughout the conflict that justice and international law must be upheld and, as such, he

fully supported the legal process underway at the ICJ. He also stated that he felt the loss of civilian life in Gaza and the humanitarian catastrophe was heartbreaking, and that the UK Government should be doing all it could to secure a sustainable ceasefire, and the resumption of peace talks.

#### 4.4.9 Questions from Annie O’Gara

*Questions - On January 26th, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) 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”, “to ensure its troops commit 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 live-streamed 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 on Palestine is being suppressed in our city’s schools?*

*What mechanisms are there for concerns to be reported to the Council by parents, youngsters, and teachers?*

In response, Councillor Dawn Dale (Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee) stated that she would like to meet with the questioner and would also send a full written technical response regarding the National Curriculum.

Councillor Dale advised that she shared the concerns of many in the city regarding the heartbreaking situation in Gaza. In her view, the news that was being reported from Gaza was devastating and the humanitarian crisis was growing in severity. She added that she agreed with Councillor Hunt's comments when he said that the urgent provisional measures set out in the ICJ's interim ruling must be followed, that Israel must comply with the orders in full, and international law must be upheld.

Councillor Dale added that she agreed that what children were seeing on the media was traumatic and distressing, and that they needed safe spaces to discuss their concerns and fears, so they could make sense of what they were seeing. They should not be expected to navigate these feelings about the conflict on their own. She explained that following the Full Council vote on the Israel – Palestine Conflict, the Council had been proactive in its options to support young residents, and discussions had taken place to develop and advocate different opportunities for them to participate in.

Councillor Dale stated that the Council, working with partners, has recognised that it needs to respond to three emerging issues for young people and the youth sector. One was the ability for young people to be able to express their authentic self with creative youth voice options, and she reported that the Council has been working closely with voluntary, community and faith sector partners who are currently producing resources to work with young people to help them understand the conflict in all its contexts and enable young people to consider their own social and emotional responses to it. She stated that the Council had also made a commitment to open dialogue with schools to look at supporting additional resources around the conflict that can open up safe spaces within school for young people to have a voice. She commented that this work was at an early stage and resources were awaited from partners which would then be fact-checked before being offered to schools.

Councillor Dale also emphasised the importance of having a workforce that is safe and well, and enabled to work with the experiences of young people that are related to the conflict. Accordingly, the Council, through its partners, will offer to provide mental health first aid for practitioners.

She commented that she would encourage any young person or parent with concerns to raise them directly with the school, its governing body or Chief Executive.

Councillor Dale concluded by undertaking to request Officers to send a copy of her response to all schools in Sheffield so that her views on the matter were understood.

4.4.10 Question from Izzy Price

*Question - 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?*

In response, Councillor Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee) explained that the Tyndall report was an important document that laid the foundation for the work that the Council was undertaking to tackle the Climate Emergency, including its 10-point plan for Climate Action. He advised that the Council was ambitious to meet its targets, but in his view, the Government had failed to provide adequate funds to tackle the climate emergency.

Councillor Miskell added that, within that national context, Sheffield's progress was comparable with other core cities and there had been notable successes, including cross-party support for climate action the Council had taken, such as introducing Climate Impact Assessments, the creation of the Ten Point Plan for Climate Action, and ensuring major schemes like Connecting Sheffield and the Clean Air Zone progress. He did, however, acknowledge that the city and the Council did need to progress much further, but that, ultimately, the city needed the support of the national government to do so.

Councillor Miskell also stated that the biggest challenge for the Council was its council homes estate, which contributed nearly 90% of the organisation's greenhouse gas emissions. He advised that there had been a 27% reduction in emissions from the non-domestic estate, and 32% reduction from its streetlighting, but with housing being such a large proportion of the Council's emissions inventory, the reporting did not reflect the progress made in other areas.

He concluded his response by confirming that the Council does remain absolutely committed to addressing the climate emergency, and needed action from the Government to match that resolve.

4.4.11 Questions from Ci Davis

*Context - 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.*

*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.*

*Questions - 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?*

*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% pa?*

*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?*

In response, Councillor Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee) stated that he was pro-growth and believed that it was through clean economic growth that society can create the shared wealth needed to tackle the climate emergency. He added that growing the economy locally meant that the Council would have more money to fund projects to tackle poverty and injustice and bring more jobs to the city.

Councillor Miskell stated that he believed that the city was living with the fallout of the reckless economic policies of the former Prime Minister, Liz Truss, which had hurt people in the city economically and made the job of tackling the climate emergency more challenging.

He commented that, in his view, the city should welcome Labour's Green Prosperity Plan, and a Labour government which would seek to sustain the highest growth in the G7, as he believed that Plan would deliver for Sheffield's citizens.

Councillor Miskell stated that the Council would not consider hosting or supporting a conference that was anti-growth. He added that the ambitions for Sheffield were pro-growth and pro-jobs to lift people out of poverty, whilst

attracting the sustainable industries of the future and tackling the climate emergency.

#### 4.4.12 Questions from Graham Wroe

Prior to asking his questions, Graham Wroe emphasised that we were in a climate emergency, with last year being the hottest on record, and scientists reporting that this year will be hotter still and forecast to breach the 1.5-degree target. He believed that, despite the Council having declared a climate emergency five years ago, it still was not acting as if there is an emergency.

*Questions - 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?*

*Sheffield's resilience to extreme weather needs to improve as global heating continues, and extreme weather events become more frequent and more extreme.*

*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 [Heatwave Action Plan](#). Is Sheffield developing one?*

*Section one of the Upper Don Valley 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?*

*The incidence of wildfires is also increasing. The Fire Brigade need more resources to cope with this, as well as for the 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?*

In response, Councillor Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee) stated that the relevant Council webpages were updated regularly. The most recent update had been February 2024 and further updates were imminent, to include the bimonthly Environment Newsletter, which was also sent out to over 5,000 recipients. He advised that he encouraged anyone who was interested to sign up to receive the newsletter and to encourage others to do so. Councillor Miskell added that climate change was frequently included in the annual council tax letter.

In relation to dealing with extreme weather events, Councillor Miskell advised that, like other emergency situations, these were led by the Emergency Planning Shared Service, which was a joint service between Rotherham and Sheffield. He explained there was an extreme weather plan, which the team put together based on the national plans and guidance, and in addition to this, service areas also had operational plans on how to respond if there was a heatwave.

Regarding flooding, Councillor Miskell advised that there was a lot of work taking place and that the Sheffield Flood Protection Programme prioritised investment in areas of greatest risk. This was why the Lower Don Valley was addressed first with the scheme that was completed there in 2017. Councillor Miskell added that he would write to Mr Wroe with more detail, as the list of plans and actions was too numerous to outline in full during this meeting.

In respect of wildfires, Councillor Miskell advised that all services would be required to develop a service-based climate adaptation risk assessment and action plan, during 2024. It was expected that this would consider the risk posed by wildfires, along with other climate risks such as increased flood and heatwave events.

4.4.13 Question from Ruth Owen

*Question - 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 per 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 UK, we would need another planet the size of Mercury to feed the world.*

*Please could Sheffield Council follow the lead of 25 towns and cities worldwide, including Edinburgh, Norwich, Exmouth, Haywards Heath, and 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.*

In response, Councillor Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee) stated that the 'Fairer, Healthier, Greener' Food Strategy for Sheffield focussed on the Council's key priorities around



addressing the climate emergency, better health and reducing inequalities. This included a commitment to use the Council's influence to create environments where healthier and more sustainable food choices were possible, easy, affordable, culturally appropriate and abundant; and to safeguard our food system by ensuring it produces nutritious food, restores nature, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and was resilient to the effects of climate change and other global shocks. Councillor Miskell added that the Strategy outlined a number of priority actions which the Council intended to take to meet those commitments, and the actions in relation to carbon emissions could be found on pages 18 and 19 of the strategy document.

Councillor Miskell explained that a public consultation was planned which would gather public views on what the areas of priority should be for the Council in relation to food access, security, sustainability, and policy, and that the consultation would also explore the reduction of meat consumption and increasing the availability of plant-based food provision. He added that the consultation was necessary due to the contentiousness of the subject.

(NOTE: At this point in the proceedings, at the suggestion of the Lord Mayor (Councillor Colin Ross) and with the approval of the Council, the one-hour time limit for petitions and public questions was extended to accommodate the remaining questions from a further three members of the public.)

4.4.14 Question from Zak Viney

*Question - 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.*

*So, I come to this meeting today to not merely 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.*

*My suggestion is that Sheffield City Council 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 clear channel 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, with larger units consuming as much electricity as 11 family homes. Not only is this exceedingly wasteful, but this advertising is often concentrated in areas of socio-economic depravity, advertising things that people living there may not be able to afford, or products which are damaging for public health, such as junk food, gambling or alcoholic products.*

*Councillor Miskell has recently been sent details of the impact of outdoor advertising in Sheffield by the campaign, Ad-Free Cities, and invited to Westminster to hear the details of the full implications of this issue.*

*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 the Council's sustainability goals?*

In response, Councillor Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee) stated that the Finance Committee was due to consider a new advertising and sponsorship policy at its meeting on 18th March 2024. This policy would draw on best practice around the country to ensure that the Council had an ethical approach to the advertising of products and services.

Councillor Miskell explained that the large and small format digital sites that were in place around the city all had planning consent and thus had been assessed regarding their impact on visual amenity and highway safety. In relation to energy use, he reported that the providers of these billboards had sustainability plans in place, including using 100% renewable energy, and switching off sites between midnight and 5:00 a.m. to reduce energy usage.

Councillor Miskell commented that the Council had very limited control over other operators of advertising sites, which were usually much larger installations. He added that only a minority of large format sites in the city were part of the City Council's contractual arrangement with providers and, in relation to small format sites, barring compliance with highways regulations and limited planning obligations, telecoms providers were free to erect advertising screens that included a telecommunications element, such as an ability to make phone calls or access the internet, wherever they wished.

#### 4.4.15 Question from Clara Cheung

*Question - In the UN Human Rights Council's universal periodic review in January and February 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.*

*The new Partner City Policy, approved by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee of Sheffield City Council on 20th November 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."*

*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).*

*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?*

In response, Councillor Tom Hunt (the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee) stated that the next meeting of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, to be held on 21st February, would consider a report setting out the current status of all twinning, friendship and other agreements and relationships that Sheffield has with other places around the world, including those in China.

Councillor Hunt explained that, in line with the recently approved Partner City Policy, this would include considering which relationships should be brought to an end, which should be maintained, and which should be deepened, and he added that the representations which had been made by the public in recent months would be taken into consideration in the drafting of the report to be submitted to the Committee.

#### 4.4.16 Questions from Julie Pearn

*Questions - In the 1980s 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.*

*In 2014, the Council switched all its banking to Barclays Bank.*

*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.*

*In March 2022, environmental activists urged the Council not to renew its contract with Barclays, as the biggest European investor in fossil fuels.*

*Nevertheless, the Council went ahead and renewed its contract with Barclays in September 2022.*

*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.*

*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.*

*The historic ruling at the International Court of Justice at The Hague on 26th 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.*

*My question to the Leader of the Council: 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?*

*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?*

In response, Councillor Tom Hunt (the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee) stated that, as mentioned earlier in the meeting, a report would be considered at the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on 21st February, about the Council's actions with respect to the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Councillor Hunt explained that the report would include discussion of the Council's existing contractual relationships and would also ask the Committee to note that Sheffield City Council does not have any relationships with companies that had been identified by the UN Human Rights Council as supporting or enabling illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories.

Councillor Hunt added that in relation to Barclays, the Council's contract was procured in line with its ethical procurement policy, which allowed the Council to ask for, and take into consideration, how the contract would generate social value within the city and more broadly. However, it did not allow the Council to take into account non-commercial matters that are prohibited by the Local Government Act 1988, and this would include the set of issues that the questioner had raised.

Councillor Hunt also advised that the Council was conducting a review of its ethical procurement policy as part of developing a wider commercial strategy for the organisation, and he would ensure that the concerns raised by the questioner and by other campaigners would be considered as part of that review. He added that when the Council's banking contract came up for renewal, it would be procured in line with the law and with the Council's ethical procurement policy.

- 4.4.17 (NOTE: The questions which had been submitted by David Cronshaw, Michael Mullin and Sam Wakeling, but which had not been asked at the meeting due to their absence, would receive written responses from the Leader of the Council (Councillor Tom Hunt) or from Councillor Ben Miskell (Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee), as appropriate, and be published on the Council's website.)

## **5. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

### **5.1 Urgent Business**

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

### **5.2 South Yorkshire Joint and Combined Authorities**

5.2.1 The Lord Mayor (Councillor Colin Ross) reported that Councillors Douglas Johnson, Glynis Chapman, Ian Horner and Brian Holmshaw had given advance notice of questions relating to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. The advance notice of the questions had enabled Councillor Tom Hunt, the Council's representative on the Mayoral Combined Authority, to provide written answers, and copies of the questions and responses had been circulated at the meeting and published on the Council's website.

5.2.2 Supplementary questions were asked by Councillors Johnson, Chapman, Horner and Holmshaw, and were answered by Councillor Hunt.

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

### **5.3 Written Questions**

A schedule of questions to Chairs of Policy Committees, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16, and which contained written answers, was circulated. Supplementary questions, under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.4, were asked and were answered by the appropriate Policy Committee Chairs until the expiry of the time limit for Members' Questions (in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.7).

**6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUSINESS PLAN AND HRA BUDGET 2024/25**

6.1 On the motion moved by Councillor Douglas Johnson, and seconded by Councillor Tom Hunt, and after contributions from nine other Members, and following a right of reply from Councillor Johnson, it was:-

**RESOLVED:** That, in accordance with the resolution passed by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee at its meeting held on 24th January 2024 relating to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and HRA Budget for 2024/25:-

- (a) the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan report for 2024/25 and the HRA Business Plan priorities for 2024/25, as set out in the Financial Appendix to the report, are approved;
- (b) the HRA Revenue Budget 2024/25, as set out in the Financial Appendix to the report, is approved;
- (c) it be noted that once adopted by the City Council, monitoring the delivery of HRA Business Plan priorities will be within the remit of the Housing Policy Committee and a regular performance reporting schedule will be approved;
- (d) rents for council dwellings be increased by 7.7% from April 2024, in line with the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard;
- (e) garage rents for garage plots and sites be increased by 7.7% from April 2024;
- (f) the sheltered housing charge be increased by 6.7% from April 2024;
- (g) the burglar alarm charge be increased by 6.7% from April 2024;
- (h) the furnished accommodation charge be increased by 6.7% from April 2024;
- (i) no increase be made to the community heating charge at this time; and
- (j) rents for temporary accommodation be increased by 7.7% for 2024/25.

6.1.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote on the Motion was FOR - 63 Members; AGAINST - 8 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members.)

At this point in the proceedings, the Lord Mayor (Councillor Colin Ross) left the meeting, and the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Jayne Dunn) chaired the meeting for the remainder of the proceedings.

**7. NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING "EXTENDING THE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND" - GIVEN BY COUNCILLOR DAWN DALE AND TO BE SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR RUTH MILSOM**

7.1 It was moved by Councillor Dawn Dale, and seconded by Councillor Ruth Milsom, that this Council:-

- (a) notes that the Government has decided to end funding for the Household Support Fund from the end of March 2024, and further notes with concern that the Government did not use the Autumn Statement or the Local Government Finance Settlement to confirm an extension of the Fund;
- (b) notes that Sheffield received £10.4m from the Household Support Fund in 2023/24 which is used to provide financial support to low-income and vulnerable households who are struggling to afford the essentials;
- (c) notes that the Fund is used to provide Free School Meal vouchers to 32,000 households during the school holidays;
- (d) notes that the support that the Council has provided through the Household Support Fund has helped tens of thousands of households in Sheffield who have struggled to afford energy, food, and other essentials;
- (e) notes that the Household Support Fund is a key part of the Council's Cost of Living response which has brought together partners from the public sector, business, and the voluntary, community and faith sector to help those in need;
- (f) notes that the average number of Household Support Fund applications received per day in November 2023 is 112, which is a 148% increase on the same month last year, and that in 2023 there was an overall 47% increase in applications compared to 2022;
- (g) notes that the Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee has written to the Government to call for the Household Support Fund to be extended;
- (h) believes that ending the Household Support Fund will reduce vital support for people in our city who need it most;
- (i) believes that a cliff-edge in welfare provision in March 2024 must be avoided; and
- (j) calls on the Government to urgently provide clarity and reassurance to households in Sheffield, and to extend the Household Support Fund beyond March 2024.

7.2 Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Tim Huggan, and seconded by Councillor Kurtis Crossland, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by the addition of a new paragraph (k) as follows:-

(k) calls on all parties in Westminster to remove the two-child cap on Child Benefit which contributes to child poverty among many, larger families.

7.3 It was then moved by Councillor Maroof Raouf, and seconded by Councillor Angela Argenzio, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by:-

1. the addition of new paragraphs (i) and (j) as follows, and the re-lettering of the original paragraph (j) as a new paragraph (k):-

(i) believes that poverty has been made significantly worse by the removal of the £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit and the introduction of the two-child cap on Child Benefit;

(j) believes that, in addition to the local flexibility offered by the Household Support Fund, an uplift to national benefits is needed to address systemic poverty;

2. the insertion, in the new paragraph (k) [original paragraph (j)], after the words "in Sheffield,", of the words "to remove the two-child cap on Child Benefit, to provide a Universal Credit uplift of £40 per week,".

7.4 After contributions from six other Members, and following a right of reply from Councillor Dawn Dale, the amendment moved by Councillor Tim Huggan was put to the vote and was carried.

7.4.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 46 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 22 Members.)

7.5 The amendment moved by Councillor Maroof Raouf was then put to the vote and was also carried.

7.5.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 68 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Although Labour Group and Liberal Democrat Group Members voted for, they abstained from voting on Part 2 of the amendment.)

7.6 The original Motion, as amended, was then put as a Substantive Motion in the following form and carried:-

**RESOLVED:** That this Council:-

(a) notes that the Government has decided to end funding for the Household Support Fund from the end of March 2024, and further notes with concern



- that the Government did not use the Autumn Statement or the Local Government Finance Settlement to confirm an extension of the Fund;
- (b) notes that Sheffield received £10.4m from the Household Support Fund in 2023/24 which is used to provide financial support to low-income and vulnerable households who are struggling to afford the essentials;
  - (c) notes that the Fund is used to provide Free School Meal vouchers to 32,000 households during the school holidays;
  - (d) notes that the support that the Council has provided through the Household Support Fund has helped tens of thousands of households in Sheffield who have struggled to afford energy, food, and other essentials;
  - (e) notes that the Household Support Fund is a key part of the Council's Cost of Living response which has brought together partners from the public sector, business, and the voluntary, community and faith sector to help those in need;
  - (f) notes that the average number of Household Support Fund applications received per day in November 2023 is 112, which is a 148% increase on the same month last year, and that in 2023 there was an overall 47% increase in applications compared to 2022;
  - (g) notes that the Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee has written to the Government to call for the Household Support Fund to be extended;
  - (h) believes that ending the Household Support Fund will reduce vital support for people in our city who need it most;
  - (i) believes that poverty has been made significantly worse by the removal of the £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit and the introduction of the two-child cap on Child Benefit;
  - (j) believes that, in addition to the local flexibility offered by the Household Support Fund, an uplift to national benefits is needed to address systemic poverty;
  - (k) believes that a cliff-edge in welfare provision in March 2024 must be avoided;
  - (l) calls on the Government to urgently provide clarity and reassurance to households in Sheffield, to remove the two-child cap on Child Benefit, to provide a Universal Credit uplift of £40 per week, and to extend the Household Support Fund beyond March 2024; and
  - (m) calls on all parties in Westminster to remove the two-child cap on Child Benefit which contributes to child poverty among many, larger families.

7.6.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote on the Substantive Motion was FOR - 70 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Although Labour Group Members voted for, they abstained from voting on paragraphs (l) and (m) of the Substantive Motion.)

**8. NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING "TACKLING EMPTY HOMES" - GIVEN BY COUNCILLOR SOPHIE THORNTON AND TO BE SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR MIKE LEVERY**

8.1 It was formally moved by Councillor Sophie Thornton, and formally seconded by Councillor Mike Levery, that:-

This Council notes:-

- (a) the national housing crisis, with the housing shortage elevating private rent costs;
- (b) housing becoming increasingly unaffordable, particularly for lower-income, vulnerable and younger households;
- (c) concern for the numerous families currently in temporary accommodation;
- (d) the Council's current policy which applies the Long-Term Empty Premium to Council Tax (LTEP) on properties left empty;
- (e) that in Sheffield, 1317 properties have been empty for 1-2 years, 973 properties are currently subject to the LTEP, and 295 properties are second homes;
- (f) the lack of incentives to renovate and retrofit empty properties;
- (g) the need for considered and sensitive policy-setting, considering complex circumstances that can leave homes empty for long periods, including: bereavement, declining or ill-health, diminished capacity, a building's listed status and delays in planning permission;
- (h) the hard work of teams across the Council working to ensure fit and proper private rental property in the city, supporting credible and responsible landlords;

This Council believes:-

- (i) the housing crisis requires urgency and a strategic approach to prevent wasted property;
- (j) this Council has a duty as a responsible local authority to increase affordable rental accommodation;

- (k) incentives and support should be developed to encourage renovating and retrofitting empty homes;
- (l) that people purchasing empty homes should not be liable for increased council tax rates predating their ownership;
- (m) that tackling empty homes is vital for tangible climate action, with the benefits of retrofitting existing properties over the pressures on land use and materials that come with new builds;

This Council therefore resolves to:-

- (n) support responsible and credible landlords;
- (o) request the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme:-
  - (i) investigation of ways to increase council tax on empty properties and second homes, ensuring thorough consideration for complex circumstances; and
  - (ii) formulating policy to incentivise the renovation and retrofit of empty homes, such as resetting to standard council tax rates upon sale;
- (p) request the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, investigation of ways to tackle unnecessary delays in obtaining planning permission in the city; and
- (q) write to the Government to:-
  - (i) advocate for reform to end discounts for empty and derelict properties;
  - (ii) seek support for the Liberal Democrat policy of restricting the sale of newbuilds as second homes; and
  - (ii) request support for local authorities to ensure they have the skills and resources to maximise economic benefits from tackling empty homes.

8.2 Whereupon, it was formally moved by Councillor Fran Belbin, and formally seconded by Councillor Zahira Naz, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by:-

1. the deletion of paragraphs (o) and (p) and the re-lettering of paragraphs (n) and (q) as new paragraphs (r) and (s); and
2. the addition of new paragraphs (n) to (q) as follows:-

This Council:-

- (n) notes that a decision on implementing applying the LTEP at 100% to properties empty and unfurnished over 12 months and on second homes, will be taken by the Finance Committee on 19th February 2024, with the Council only gaining the power to do so given recent changes to national legislation, and so further notes that this matter does not need to be referred to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee;
- (o) notes, furthermore, that the Chair of Finance Committee and Labour councillors have been clear in their support for implementing the changes and doing everything we can to incentivise empty properties coming quickly back into use;
- (p) notes the strain placed upon local authority planning departments following 14 years of government cuts, but highlights the considerable success of the Council's Planning Service, with applications reaching a successful outcome higher than the national average and metropolitan area averages;
- (q) welcomes Labour's commitment to reforming the planning system and to improve the capacity in the system by hiring more than 300 planners in the public sector;

8.3 It was then formally moved by Councillor Douglas Johnson, and formally seconded by Councillor Brian Holmshaw, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by:-

1. the addition (at the end of the section "That this Council notes") of a new paragraph (i) as follows, and the re-lettering of the original paragraphs (i) to (n) as new paragraphs (j) to (o):-
  - (i) that Green Party councillors have previously proposed to invest in additional empty homes officers, who do excellent work in bringing empty properties back into use, creating new homes and reducing the blight on residential streets;
2. the deletion of the original paragraph (o);
3. the addition of new paragraphs (p) and (q) as follows, and the re-lettering of original paragraphs (p) and (q) as new paragraphs (r) and (s):-
  - (p) support the principle of making use of new powers to maximise the charge of council tax on empty properties and second homes;
  - (q) endorse the response of the Local Government Association to the Government's consultation on social housing allocations, in particular with regard to the call for reform of the Right to Buy

system which has destroyed a large part of the country's social housing;

4. the deletion, in the new paragraph (s) [original paragraph (q)], of the words "Liberal Democrat"; and
  5. the addition of new paragraphs (t) and (u) as follows:-
    - (t) request the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee to write to the Local Government Association to express this Council's support for its call for reform of the Right to Buy system; and
    - (u) support investment in further action on empty homes, including expanding the Council's housing acquisitions to help alleviate the homelessness crisis.
- 8.4 The amendment moved by Councillor Fran Belbin was put to the vote and was carried, but in part. Part 1 and paragraphs (n) and (p) in Part 2 of the amendment were carried, and paragraphs (o) and (q) in Part 2 of the amendment were lost.
- 8.4.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 36 Members; AGAINST - 26 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 6 Members. Although Green Group Members voted for, they voted against paragraphs (o) and (q) in Part 2 of the amendment.)
- 8.5 The amendment moved by Councillor Douglas Johnson was then put to the vote and was carried, but in part. Part 1 of the amendment was lost and Parts 2 to 5 of the amendment were carried.
- 8.5.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 36 Members; AGAINST - 25 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 6 Members. Although Labour Group Members voted for, they abstained from voting on Part 1 of the amendment. Although Liberal Democrat Group Members voted against, they voted for Part 3 and paragraph (t) in Part 5, and abstained from voting on paragraph (u) in Part 5 of the amendment.)
- 8.6 The original Motion, as amended, was then put as a Substantive Motion in the following form and carried:-

**RESOLVED:** That:-

this Council notes:-

- (a) the national housing crisis, with the housing shortage elevating private rent costs;
- (b) housing becoming increasingly unaffordable, particularly for lower-income, vulnerable and younger households;
- (c) concern for the numerous families currently in temporary accommodation;

- (d) the Council's current policy which applies the Long-Term Empty Premium to Council Tax (LTEP) on properties left empty;
- (e) that in Sheffield, 1317 properties have been empty for 1-2 years, 973 properties are currently subject to the LTEP, and 295 properties are second homes;
- (f) the lack of incentives to renovate and retrofit empty properties;
- (g) the need for considered and sensitive policy-setting, considering complex circumstances that can leave homes empty for long periods, including: bereavement, declining or ill-health, diminished capacity, a building's listed status and delays in planning permission;
- (h) the hard work of teams across the Council working to ensure fit and proper private rental property in the city, supporting credible and responsible landlords;

this Council believes:-

- (i) the housing crisis requires urgency and a strategic approach to prevent wasted property;
- (j) this Council has a duty as a responsible local authority to increase affordable rental accommodation;
- (k) incentives and support should be developed to encourage renovating and retrofitting empty homes;
- (l) that people purchasing empty homes should not be liable for increased council tax rates predating their ownership;
- (m) that tackling empty homes is vital for tangible climate action, with the benefits of retrofitting existing properties over the pressures on land use and materials that come with new builds;

this Council:-

- (n) notes that a decision on implementing applying the LTEP at 100% to properties empty and unfurnished over 12 months and on second homes, will be taken by the Finance Committee on 19th February 2024, with the Council only gaining the power to do so given recent changes to national legislation, and so further notes that this matter does not need to be referred to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee;
- (o) notes the strain placed upon local authority planning departments following 14 years of government cuts, but highlights the considerable success of the Council's Planning Service, with applications reaching a successful outcome higher than the national average and metropolitan area averages;

this Council therefore resolves to:-

- (p) support responsible and credible landlords;
- (q) support the principle of making use of new powers to maximise the charge of council tax on empty properties and second homes;
- (r) endorse the response of the Local Government Association to the Government's consultation on social housing allocations, in particular with regard to the call for reform of the Right to Buy system which has destroyed a large part of the country's social housing;
- (s) write to the Government to:-
  - (i) advocate for reform to end discounts for empty and derelict properties;
  - (ii) seek support for the policy of restricting the sale of newbuilds as second homes; and
  - (ii) request support for local authorities to ensure they have the skills and resources to maximise economic benefits from tackling empty homes;
- (t) request the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee to write to the Local Government Association to express this Council's support for its call for reform of the Right to Buy system; and
- (u) support investment in further action on empty homes, including expanding the Council's housing acquisitions to help alleviate the homelessness crisis.

8.6.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote on the Substantive Motion was FOR - 66 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Although Labour Group Members voted for, they voted against paragraph (l) of the Substantive Motion. Although Liberal Democrat Group Members voted for, they abstained from voting on paragraphs (n) and (u) of the Substantive Motion. Although Sheffield Community Councillors Group Members voted for, they voted against paragraph (l) and sub-paragraph (s)(ii), and abstained from voting on paragraphs (n), (o), (q), (r), (t) and (u) of the Substantive Motion.)

**9. NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING "FIVE YEARS SINCE DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY" - GIVEN BY COUNCILLOR PAUL TURPIN AND TO BE SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALEXI DIMOND**

9.1 It was formally moved by Councillor Paul Turpin, and formally seconded by Councillor Alexi Dimond, that:-

This Council notes:-

- (a) Sheffield City Council (SCC) has declared a Climate Emergency and has an ambition to become a zero-carbon city by 2030;
- (b) in 2019, The Tyndall Centre produced a report stating that Sheffield City Council must reduce its carbon emissions by 14% each year to achieve zero carbon by 2030;
- (c) the latest 2022 CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions data indicates that Sheffield City Council has reduced emissions by 3% since 2019, and needs to reduce emissions by a further 77% by 2030 to be in line with the Sheffield-wide 80% reduction on 2019 emissions that the Pathways to Decarbonisation Report suggested could be achievable by 2030;

This Council believes:-

- (d) Green involvement in the Council Administration has been central to the climate action the Council has taken: from introducing Climate Impact Assessments, to the creation of the Ten Point Plan for Climate Action, to ensuring major schemes like Connecting Sheffield and the Clean Air Zone progress in the face of political opposition;
- (e) that unrelenting action to tackle the climate emergency is the only way to achieve zero carbon by 2030, and the Council should be working at all Policy Committees on urgently reducing emissions;

This Council resolves to:-

- (f) ask the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, implementation of a workplace parking levy to leverage funding for active and public transport at comparable levels to Nottingham City Council, who raised around £680 million over 10 years;
- (g) request the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, development of an advertising policy which does not support high carbon industries and products harmful to people and nature, such as promoted by Adfree Cities;
- (h) request the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, the completion of the Green Jobs and Skills Strategy initiated by Greens during the Cooperative Executive;
- (i) call on the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to make more funding available for Green Skills;
- (j) remind all Policy Committees to ensure the Climate Impact Assessment is used to develop all SCC decisions and actions;



- (k) ask the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, an update on progress against the Renewable Energy strategy proposed by Greens in November 2022's full Council meeting;
  - (l) ask the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme as a matter of urgency, investigation of the practicalities of issuing Green Bonds to raise extra funding to support climate action;
  - (m) ask the Member Development Working Group to consider how to ensure effective Climate Literacy training for all Members; and
  - (n) ask the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, requiring all Policy Committees to set targets and prove they are reducing emissions across the portfolio, including publication of any increases.
- 9.1.1 (NOTE: With the agreement of the Council and at the request of the mover of the Motion (Councillor Paul Turpin), the Motion as published on the agenda was altered by the substitution of the words "ask the Member Development Working Group to consider how to ensure effective Climate Literacy training for all Members" for the words "ensure that all Councillors undertake Climate Literacy training, and to ask the Member Development Working Group to oversee the delivery of that training" in paragraph (m) of the Motion.)
- 9.2 Whereupon, it was formally moved by Councillor Minesh Parekh, and formally seconded by Councillor Craig Gamble Pugh, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by:-
- 1. the insertion, in paragraph (a), of the words "and a Nature Emergency" after the words "Climate Emergency";
  - 2. the addition (at the end of the section "That this Council notes") of new paragraphs (d) to (f) as follows:-
    - (d) that public transport has a crucial role to play in addressing the climate emergency and welcomes plans to bring buses and trams under public ownership, and measures the Council is taking to encourage active travel;
    - (e) that Olivia Blake MP has brought the Climate and Ecology Bill to Parliament with cross-party support; the Bill is drafted by many of the UK's leading climate and ecology scientists and is the only piece of proposed or existing legislation that would tackle the intertwined climate and nature crises together;
    - (f) the pioneering work of the Council and South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority in developing green jobs and skills, including with the new Investment Zone – strengthening our advanced

manufacturing and building on the success of the Innovation District in the Lower Don Valley;

3. the re-lettering of the original paragraphs (d) and (e) as new paragraphs (g) and (h);
  4. the addition (within the section “That this Council believes”) of new paragraphs (i) to (k) as follows, and the re-lettering of all further paragraphs accordingly:-
    - (i) that the Government has utterly failed to provide the necessary funds to tackle the climate emergency;
    - (j) that Sheffield’s progress is comparable with other core cities and there has been notable successes including cross-party support for climate action the Council has taken: from introducing Climate Impact Assessments, to the creation of the Ten Point Plan for Climate Action, to ensuring major schemes like Connecting Sheffield and the Clean Air Zone progress, and notes the work currently underway to futureproof our city’s workforce, including the Council-funded upskilling of plumbers and heating engineers in air source heat pump technologies;
    - (k) that to reach net zero, the Council should undertake more cross-cutting work, and that requiring Policy Committees to set targets in isolation risks creating siloed working;
  5. the deletion of original paragraph (i); and
  6. the deletion of original paragraph (n).
- 9.2.1 (NOTE: With the agreement of the Council and at the request of the mover of the Amendment (Councillor Minesh Parekh), the Amendment as circulated at the meeting was altered by the deletion of the word “other” from paragraph (d) in Part 2 of the Amendment.)
- 9.3 It was then formally moved by Councillor Andrew Sangar, and formally seconded by Councillor Robert Reiss, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by:-
1. the addition (at the end of the section “That this Council notes”) of a new paragraph (d) as follows:-
    - (d) media reports regarding the Labour Party’s recent backtrack on a £28bn Green Investment Fund;
  2. the deletion of the original paragraphs (d) and (e);

3. the addition (within the section “That this Council believes”) of new paragraphs (e) to (h) as follows, and the re-lettering of all further paragraphs accordingly:-
  - (e) that, despite cross party support for net zero, progress has been slow due to the lack of the very substantial investment required to make significant carbon savings, the slow pace of transformation of industries, particularly energy, transport and land use and a dearth of compelling offset opportunities;
  - (f) the substantial cash investment required alongside other demands on public funds mean that strong economic growth is required in Sheffield and elsewhere, alongside technological innovation to reduce carbon emissions in better ways;
  - (g) the failure of Labour and Green councillors to vote for a food waste recycling service represents an unfortunate missed opportunity to reduce carbon emissions;
  - (h) South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority foot dragging over bus franchising and failed bus partnerships have delivered an inferior bus service to the people of Sheffield and kept people in their cars;
4. the deletion of the original paragraphs (f) and (g);
5. the deletion of the original paragraph (j) and addition of a new paragraph as follows:-
  - (j) ask the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, doing further work on Climate Impact Assessment processes and methodologies so that policy options can be compared on an estimated cost per tonne of CO2 saved basis;
6. the deletion of the original paragraph (l);
7. the deletion of the original paragraph (m) and addition of a new paragraph as follows:-
  - (m) ask the Member Development Working Group to ensure all councillors are offered training on how to understand the carbon impact of policy decisions;
- 9.3.1 (NOTE: With the agreement of the Council and at the request of the mover of the Amendment (Councillor Andrew Sangar), the Amendment as circulated at the meeting was altered by the deletion of Part 8 of the Amendment.)
- 9.4 The amendment moved by Councillor Minesh Parekh was put to the vote and was carried, but in part. Part 1, paragraphs (d) and (e) in Part 2, and Parts 3, 4

and 6 of the amendment were carried, and paragraph (f) in Part 2 and Part 5 of the amendment were lost.

- 9.4.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 67 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Although Liberal Democrat Group Members voted for, they voted against paragraphs (e) and (f) in Part 2, paragraph (j) in Part 4 and Part 5 of the amendment. Although Green Group Members and Councillor Sophie Wilson voted for, they voted against paragraph (f) in Part 2, paragraph (k) in Part 4 and Parts 5 and 6 of the amendment.)
- 9.5 The amendment moved by Councillor Andrew Sangar was then put to the vote and was lost, but in part. Parts 1, 2, 4 and 6 of the amendment were lost and Parts 3, 5 and 7 of the amendment were carried [Part 5 to be an additional sub-paragraph, not a replacement sub-paragraph].
- 9.5.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 32 Members; AGAINST - 35 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Although Labour Group Members voted against, they voted for Parts 3 and 7 and for Part 5 of the amendment to be an additional sub-paragraph [not a replacement sub-paragraph].)
- 9.6 The original Motion, as amended, was then put as a Substantive Motion in the following form and carried:-

**RESOLVED:** That:-

this Council notes:-

- (a) Sheffield City Council (SCC) has declared a Climate Emergency and a Nature Emergency and has an ambition to become a zero-carbon city by 2030;
- (b) in 2019, The Tyndall Centre produced a report stating that Sheffield City Council must reduce its carbon emissions by 14% each year to achieve zero carbon by 2030;
- (c) the latest 2022 CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions data indicates that Sheffield City Council has reduced emissions by 3% since 2019, and needs to reduce emissions by a further 77% by 2030 to be in line with the Sheffield-wide 80% reduction on 2019 emissions that the Pathways to Decarbonisation Report suggested could be achievable by 2030;
- (d) that public transport has a crucial role to play in addressing the climate emergency and welcomes plans to bring buses and trams under public ownership, and measures the Council is taking to encourage active travel;
- (e) that Olivia Blake MP has brought the Climate and Ecology Bill to Parliament with cross-party support; the Bill is drafted by many of the UK's leading climate and ecology scientists and is the only piece of proposed

or existing legislation that would tackle the intertwined climate and nature crises together;

this Council believes:-

- (f) Green involvement in the Council Administration has been central to the climate action the Council has taken: from introducing Climate Impact Assessments, to the creation of the Ten Point Plan for Climate Action, to ensuring major schemes like Connecting Sheffield and the Clean Air Zone progress in the face of political opposition;
- (g) that unrelenting action to tackle the climate emergency is the only way to achieve zero carbon by 2030, and the Council should be working at all Policy Committees on urgently reducing emissions;
- (h) that, despite cross party support for net zero, progress has been slow due to the lack of the very substantial investment required to make significant carbon savings, the slow pace of transformation of industries, particularly energy, transport and land use and a dearth of compelling offset opportunities;
- (i) the substantial cash investment required alongside other demands on public funds mean that strong economic growth is required in Sheffield and elsewhere, alongside technological innovation to reduce carbon emissions in better ways;
- (j) the failure of Labour and Green councillors to vote for a food waste recycling service represents an unfortunate missed opportunity to reduce carbon emissions;
- (k) South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority foot dragging over bus franchising and failed bus partnerships have delivered an inferior bus service to the people of Sheffield and kept people in their cars;
- (l) that the Government has utterly failed to provide the necessary funds to tackle the climate emergency;
- (m) that Sheffield's progress is comparable with other core cities and there has been notable successes including cross-party support for climate action the Council has taken: from introducing Climate Impact Assessments, to the creation of the Ten Point Plan for Climate Action, to ensuring major schemes like Connecting Sheffield and the Clean Air Zone progress, and notes the work currently underway to futureproof our city's workforce, including the Council-funded upskilling of plumbers and heating engineers in air source heat pump technologies;
- (n) that to reach net zero, the Council should undertake more cross-cutting work, and that requiring Policy Committees to set targets in isolation risks creating siloed working;

this Council resolves to:-

- (o) ask the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, implementation of a workplace parking levy to leverage funding for active and public transport at comparable levels to Nottingham City Council, who raised around £680 million over 10 years;
- (p) request the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, development of an advertising policy which does not support high carbon industries and products harmful to people and nature, such as promoted by Adfree Cities;
- (q) request the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, the completion of the Green Jobs and Skills Strategy initiated by Greens during the Cooperative Executive;
- (r) call on the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to make more funding available for Green Skills;
- (s) ask the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, doing further work on Climate Impact Assessment processes and methodologies so that policy options can be compared on an estimated cost per tonne of CO2 saved basis;
- (t) remind all Policy Committees to ensure the Climate Impact Assessment is used to develop all SCC decisions and actions;
- (u) ask the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, an update on progress against the Renewable Energy strategy proposed by Greens in November 2022's full Council meeting;
- (v) ask the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme as a matter of urgency, investigation of the practicalities of issuing Green Bonds to raise extra funding to support climate action; and
- (w) ask the Member Development Working Group to ensure all councillors are offered training on how to understand the carbon impact of policy decisions.

9.6.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote on the Substantive Motion was FOR - 66 Members; AGAINST - 1 Member; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Although Labour Group Members voted for, they voted against paragraphs (f), (o) and (r), and abstained from voting on paragraphs (p) and (q) of the Substantive Motion. Although Liberal Democrat Group Members voted for, they voted against paragraphs (e) and (m) of the Substantive Motion. Although Green Group

Members voted for, they voted against paragraphs (h) to (k), (n), (s) and (w) of the Substantive Motion.)

**10. NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING "INCREASING THE NUMBER OF COUNCIL HOMES AND THE QUALITY OF EXISTING STOCK" - GIVEN BY COUNCILLOR TONY DAMMS AND TO BE SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR DIANNE HURST**

10.1 It was formally moved by Councillor Tony Damms, and formally seconded by Councillor Dianne Hurst, that this Council:-

- (a) notes that decent housing is linked closely to physical and mental wellbeing and that in a cost of living crisis people depend even more on the comfort, decency and security of their home, yet increasing numbers of residents are losing their homes because their landlords can no longer afford the mortgage or they themselves can no longer afford to pay increased private rents or mortgages; and further notes that 3,020 people presented as homeless between April and December 2023, and of these, 584 were assessed as being owed a full homelessness duty;
- (b) notes that in Sheffield we need to build 3,018 net new homes a year to satisfy increasing demand and yet, through right to buy and disposals, social housing stock is decreasing each year, and further notes that regeneration is good for the local economy, it brings in business, creates jobs and generates pride in the local economy;
- (c) deplores that because of increasing building costs, our Housing Service bought homes off plan this municipal year and struggled to maintain the decency of existing stock; notes that many tenants are living in homes with damp, mould and leaking roofs and this affects their mental and physical health; and further notes that during the current municipal year disrepair claims cost the Council dearly;
- (d) notes that during a climate emergency the Council has a role to play and, as a local authority, has pledged to meet by 2030, yet is still talking about devising a route map to invest in bringing homes up to a C grade of environmental efficiency and has a programme to retrofit just 355 homes by external cladding on the principle of worst first and this will draw to an end next financial year;
- (e) asserts that this catalogue of failure displays a lack of ambition that is unworthy of our citizens; and
- (f) therefore resolves to:-
  - (i) re-commit to building council homes;

- (ii) invest in existing council stock to improve warmth, security and energy efficiency; and
- (iii) ask the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider for its work programme consideration of the performance of the Housing Policy Committee against these aims.

10.2 Whereupon, it was formally moved by Councillor Nabeela Mowlana, and formally seconded by Councillor Ben Miskell, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by:-

1. the addition, at the end of sub-paragraph (f)(i), of the words “whilst supporting partnerships to significantly increase all types of affordable homes, including housing association properties”; and
2. the addition of new paragraphs (g) to (i) as follows:-
  - (g) notes the renewed focus on building affordable housing in the city, including through the development of the Housing Strategy under the oversight of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee and the Council’s partnership work with Homes England, and welcomes the approval of the Council’s draft Local Plan which will make a huge difference in delivering affordable homes in the city;
  - (h) notes Labour’s commitment to reforming the planning system in England to provide the clarity and certainty that industry and local government need to get Britain building more houses, to create new sources of green energy and to get the economy growing; and
  - (i) believes a Labour government will reform arcane purchasing rules with reformed compulsory purchase rules to support strategic development on large sites, allowing local leaders to play a more active role in land assembly.

10.3 It was then formally moved by Councillor Penny Baker, and formally seconded by Councillor Sophie Thornton, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by:-

1. the deletion of paragraph (e);
2. the addition of a new paragraph (e) as follows:-
  - (e) notes that Liberal Democrats would have a national target for building social homes aiming for 150,000 per year with new powers for local authorities to build their own social and affordable housing;
3. the substitution, in sub-paragraph (f)(i) of the word “affordable”, for the word “council”; and



4. the deletion of sub-paragraph (f)(iii).
- 10.4 It was then formally moved by Councillor Douglas Johnson, and formally seconded by Councillor Henry Nottage, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by:-
1. the addition of a new paragraph (c) as follows, and the re-lettering of the original paragraphs (c) to (f) as new paragraphs (d) to (g):-
    - (c) endorses the response of the Local Government Association to the Government's consultation on social housing allocations, in particular with regard to the call for reform of the Right to Buy system which has destroyed a large part of the country's social housing;
  2. the deletion, in the new paragraph (d) [original paragraph (c)], of all the words after the words "increasing building costs," and the addition of the following words instead - "councillors from all parties voted to reduce the number of homes that could be built under the Council's Stock Increase Programme."
- 10.5 The amendment moved by Councillor Nabeela Mowlana was put to the vote and was carried, but in part. Part 1 and paragraph (g) in Part 2 of the amendment were carried, and paragraphs (h) and (i) in Part 2 of the amendment were lost.
- 10.5.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 41 Members; AGAINST - 24 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Although Liberal Democrat Group Members voted against, they abstained from voting on Part 1 of the amendment. Although Green Group Members voted for, they voted against paragraphs (h) and (i) in Part 2 of the amendment. Although Sheffield Community Councillors Group Members voted for, they voted against paragraphs (g) and (i) in Part 2 of the amendment.)
- 10.6 The amendment moved by Councillor Penny Baker was then put to the vote and was carried, but in part. Parts 1 and 4 of the amendment were carried, and Parts 2 and 3 of the amendment were lost.
- 10.6.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 37 Members; AGAINST - 29 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Although Green Group Members voted for, they voted against Parts 2 and 3 of the amendment.)
- 10.7 The amendment moved by Councillor Douglas Johnson was then put to the vote and was carried, but in part. Part 1 of the amendment was carried, and Part 2 of the amendment was lost.
- 10.7.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 66 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Although Labour Group, Liberal Democrat

Group and Sheffield Community Councillors Group Members voted for, they voted against Part 2 of the amendment.)

- 10.8 The original Motion, as amended, was then put as a Substantive Motion in the following form and carried:-

**RESOLVED:** That this Council:-

- (a) notes that decent housing is linked closely to physical and mental wellbeing and that in a cost of living crisis people depend even more on the comfort, decency and security of their home, yet increasing numbers of residents are losing their homes because their landlords can no longer afford the mortgage or they themselves can no longer afford to pay increased private rents or mortgages; and further notes that 3,020 people presented as homeless between April and December 2023, and of these, 584 were assessed as being owed a full homelessness duty;
- (b) notes that in Sheffield we need to build 3,018 net new homes a year to satisfy increasing demand and yet, through right to buy and disposals, social housing stock is decreasing each year, and further notes that regeneration is good for the local economy, it brings in business, creates jobs and generates pride in the local economy;
- (c) endorses the response of the Local Government Association to the Government's consultation on social housing allocations, in particular with regard to the call for reform of the Right to Buy system which has destroyed a large part of the country's social housing;
- (d) deplores that because of increasing building costs, our Housing Service bought homes off plan this municipal year and struggled to maintain the decency of existing stock; notes that many tenants are living in homes with damp, mould and leaking roofs and this affects their mental and physical health; and further notes that during the current municipal year disrepair claims cost the Council dearly;
- (e) notes that during a climate emergency the Council has a role to play and, as a local authority, has pledged to meet by 2030, yet is still talking about devising a route map to invest in bringing homes up to a C grade of environmental efficiency and has a programme to retrofit just 355 homes by external cladding on the principle of worst first and this will draw to an end next financial year;
- (f) therefore resolves to:-
  - (i) re-commit to building council homes whilst supporting partnerships to significantly increase all types of affordable homes, including housing association properties; and

- (ii) invest in existing council stock to improve warmth, security and energy efficiency; and
- (g) notes the renewed focus on building affordable housing in the city, including through the development of the Housing Strategy under the oversight of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee and the Council's partnership work with Homes England, and welcomes the approval of the Council's draft Local Plan which will make a huge difference in delivering affordable homes in the city.

10.8.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote on the Substantive Motion was FOR - 66 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Although Liberal Democrat Group and Sheffield Community Councillors Group Members voted for, they voted against paragraph (g) of the Substantive Motion.)

## 11. REVIEW OF THE PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH STANDARDS COMPLAINTS AND COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

11.1 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** On the motion formally moved by Councillor Mohammed Mahroof and formally seconded by Councillor Fran Belbin, that this Council approves the changes to the Procedure for Dealing with Standards Complaints and the Councillor Code of Conduct, as outlined in sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the report and as set out in Appendices A and B.

## 12. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS OF AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

12.1 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** On the motion formally moved by Councillor Mohammed Mahroof and formally seconded by Councillor Fran Belbin, that this Council:-

- (a) approves the appointment of David Irvine and Martyn Thorpe as Independent Persons for a term of four years, to the end of the Municipal Year in 2028;
- (b) approves the appointment of James Brackley as a non-voting Co-Opted Member of the Audit and Standards Committee for a term of four years, to the end of the Municipal Year in 2028; and
- (c) approves the extension of the term of Alison Howard, the current non-voting Co-Opted Member of the Audit and Standards Committee, for a further four years, to the end of the Municipal Year in 2028.

### **13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- 13.1 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** On the motion formally moved by Councillor Mary Lea and formally seconded by Councillor Ruth Milsom, that (a) the minutes of the ordinary meetings of the Council held on 1st November and 6th December 2023 be approved as true and accurate records and (b) a footnote be inserted into the minutes of the meeting on 6th December, under sub-paragraph (b)(iv) of the resolution in item 10 on Banning Single-Use Vapes on Environmental and Health Grounds, suggesting that, to more accurately reflect the collaborative nature of the work in question, the words “, working alongside Public Health,” should have been included in the text, after the words “Sheffield Youth Cabinet”.

### **14. MEMBERSHIPS OF COUNCIL BODIES, REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OTHER BODIES AND RELATED ISSUES**

- 14.1 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** On the motion formally moved by Councillor Mary Lea and formally seconded by Councillor Sue Alston, that:-

(a) it be noted that Councillor Will Sapwell, who was elected on 18th January 2024 as a Stannington Ward Councillor, has joined the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, thereby restoring the political composition of the Council to the position that was reported to the Council meeting on 1st November 2023, (i.e. 31 Labour; 29 Liberal Democrat; 14 Green; and 8 Sheffield Community Councillors; with 2 Members [Councillors Lewis Chichen and Sophie Wilson] not being members of any group on the Council), and that, accordingly, there is no change required to be made to the allocation of seats on Council Committees to the political groups, as approved at that Council meeting on 1st November 2023;

(b) it be noted that Councillor Will Sapwell became a member of the North Local Area Committee upon his election on 18th January 2024;

(c) it be noted that, at its meeting held on 6th December 2023, the North Local Area Committee had appointed Councillor Ann Whitaker to serve as Deputy Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, filling the vacancy which had arisen in that position;

(d) it be noted that, in accordance with the authority given by the City Council at its annual meeting held on 17th May 2023, the Monitoring Officer had authorised the following appointment(s), with effect from the date(s) shown:-

Corporate Parenting Board - Councillor Ruth Mersereau removed as member, with effect from 14th December 2023.

Governance Committee - Councillor Dianne Hurst replaced Councillor Garry Weatherall as a member of the Committee, and Councillor Garry Weatherall replaced Councillor Dianne Hurst as a substitute member

of the Committee, both with effect from 19th December 2023.

- Licensing Committee - Councillor Garry Weatherall appointed as a member of the Committee, with effect from 19th December 2023.
- Education, Children and Families Policy Committee - Councillor Toby Mallinson appointed as a substitute member of the Committee, with effect from 15th January 2024.
- Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee - Councillor Will Sapwell replaced Councillor Gail Smith as a member of the Committee, with effect from 23rd January 2024.

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

- Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee - Councillor Dianne Hurst to fill a vacancy as substitute member.
- Governance Committee - Councillor Mary Lea to replace Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards.
- Audit and Standards Committee - Councillor Garry Weatherall to replace Councillor Bryan Lodge.
- Housing Policy Committee - Councillor Gail Smith to replace Councillor Barbara Masters.
- Corporate Member Group - Councillor Mary Lea to replace Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards.

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

- Learning Disabilities Partnership Board - Councillor Peter Price to be removed as member due to a reduction in the number of required nominations to this Board.

This page is intentionally left blank