

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – 31ST MARCH 2021

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE MEETING

1. DEMANDING AN END TO THE NATIONAL CLADDING SCANDAL

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes it is now over three and a half years since the tragic Grenfell Tower fire and yet the Government have failed to get to grips with the scandal of dangerous cladding;
- (b) notes that lack of proper action from government over covering the costs has affected Sheffield residents with many having bought their property in good faith, only to face both the immediate cost of having to fund 'waking watches', as well as not knowing whether they will one day be confronted by a financially crippling bill from their building owner for remedial works;
- (c) believes it would be distressing to see anyone held to ransom in this way at any time, but it is even more concerning given the current economic uncertainty and pandemic, and that whilst all of this hangs over them, owners in these tower blocks have little chance of selling their flats, and it is not hard to imagine the impact this must be having on the mental wellbeing of the individuals affected;
- (d) believes it is time for firm action from the Government rather than continued broken promises, to avoid a repeat of the Grenfell Tower tragedy;
- (e) deeply regrets that, because of the cladding crisis, residents in the Wicker Riverside were evacuated during a pandemic, and just before Christmas, and that residents subsequently lived with the fear that they may be asked to evacuate their homes for months;
- (f) welcomes the installation of the alarm to relieve the waking watch in Wicker Riverside, but believes that, even with the Wicker Riverside having received "emergency" funding for the alarm to be fitted from the Waking Watch Relief Fund, first announced in December, it took far too long to install, with tens of thousands of pounds for the cost of waking watches falling on residents and a real impact to their mental health and sense of security;
- (g) believes that government are not providing the support needed to deal with all the safety problems faced in high-rise homes, including those that relate to non-ACM cladding – such as Sheffield buildings like Metis and Wicker Riverside - and that, furthermore, there is no real help for buildings with other safety issues or buildings under 18 metres in height;

- (h) believes that this is inexcusable, and that the Government must come forward with proposals for comprehensive remediation for safety issues and all buildings, at no cost to leaseholders;
- (i) notes that locally this Administration is fully supporting Sheffield City Council tenants in high-rises and, having checked out all blocks, no further cladding is to be removed, and that all blocks are regularly checked for fire safety protection;
- (j) further notes that, as part of the Housing Revenue Account, the Council will invest £500 million into council housing stock over the next five years, including investment in further health and safety measures such as fire safety improvements;
- (k) notes, however, that far more needs to be done for those in private blocks and notes that the Leader of the Council has confirmed the Council's support for the campaign to 'End Our Cladding Scandal' which demands that Government leads a national effort to ensure safety in all tower blocks, with the prioritisation of those blocks most at risk;
- (l) confirms its backing for Sheffield Cladding Action Group and their calls on the Government to take these 10 steps to end the National Cladding Scandal:-
 - (i) the Government must lead an urgent national effort to remove all dangerous cladding from buildings by June 2022;
 - (ii) the Building Safety Fund must cover all buildings, regardless of height, and a range of internal and external fire safety defects, not just cladding;
 - (iii) the Government should provide the money up front and then seek to recover it from any responsible parties or via a temporary levy on development;
 - (iv) social housing providers must have full and equal access to the fund;
 - (v) the Government must compel building owners or managers to be honest with residents about fire safety defects;
 - (vi) the Government should cover the cost of interim safety measures;
 - (vii) the Government should act as an insurer of last resort and underwrite insurance where premiums have soared;
 - (viii) a fairer, faster process is needed to replace the EWS form and funding is necessary to ensure all buildings requiring a form are surveyed within 12 months;
 - (ix) mental health support must be offered to affected residents; and

- (x) protecting residents from historic and future costs must be a key commitment of new building safety legislation;
- (m) requests officers investigate how the Council can implement:-
 - (i) requiring freeholders of private or housing association residential blocks taller than eighteen metres in Sheffield to make publicly available periodic fire risk and safety assessments, with a recommendation that this duty does not lead to a disproportionate cost for leaseholders or tenants; and
 - (ii) querying developers submitting new planning applications of their suitability to build again in Sheffield, if any previous construction project of theirs is subject to unresolved cladding or other major fire safety issues like compartmentation;
- (n) notes the results of the mental health study by Dr Martin of the UK Cladding Action Group of those affected by the cladding crisis where 9 in 10 people said their mental health had deteriorated as a direct result of the cladding situation;
- (o) resolves to consider how the Council could enable access to additional mental health support for those affected by the fire safety crisis, consulting with mental health services (both VCSEs, SCC and NHS) and cladding groups for how this could be best provided;
- (p) requests that officers report regularly to the relevant committee on the work to remove combustible cladding from residential properties, and address other serious fire safety issues like compartmentation, in Sheffield;
- (q) resolves to send this motion to all Sheffield MPs and ask that they support amendments to the Fire Safety Bill that seek to prevent the costs of fire safety issues falling on leaseholders, and ask them to ask others in their parties to do the same;
- (r) commits to putting this motion and the 10 demands directly to Government; and
- (s) resolves to write to ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to support the End Our Cladding Scandal campaign and publish a database of every affected building, including type, height and cladding material used.

2. BUS SERVICES

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes that the city's bus services have been devastated by central government funding cuts since the formation of the coalition government in 2010, with funding to South Yorkshire's bus service slashed by 48% - leading to routes reduced and fares going up;
- (b) notes the regional imbalances for bus funding whereby buses in London get the funding equivalent of £76 per head, and yet it in Sheffield it is only £5, and believes this is simply unacceptable;
- (c) believes that everything possible must be done to bring greater investment into the city's bus service and that Sheffield is best served by taking matters into its own hands, and notes the repeated calls from this Administration for re-regulation of the bus services – including franchising – to be considered;
- (d) notes that as a result of the Sheffield Devolution Deal, the Mayor of Sheffield City Region, Dan Jarvis, and the leaders of the Combined Authority have been able to bring forward much needed investment into the city's bus service and recently announced increased support for young people with the extension of concessionary travel fares for under 21s;
- (e) notes that South Yorkshire local leaders, including Sheffield, and the Region's Mayor, are investing £3.2 million to improve the region's network, as part of the Mayoral Combined Authority's recovery plan for the region, which will replace up to a third of community transport buses with electric vehicles, upgrade 300 bus shelters, and install electronic displays to 250 bus stops, and notes that the funding for this is a direct result of the Sheffield Devolution Deal;
- (f) notes that in the longer term this Administration is collaboratively working across the region to deliver cheaper fares, improved services and better integration with other transport, as well as widespread conversion to zero-emissions vehicles;
- (g) notes the recent comments from South Yorkshire Leaders and the Region's Mayor that ultimately, we need a structure that lets us build the service right for the city's passengers, including the possibility of franchising;
- (h) commits to building a stronger, greener and fairer economy – and that a sustainable, accessible, affordable and reliable bus network must play a central role in delivering this;
- (i) notes that this Administration is working collaboratively to urgently work on how to implement lessons from the comprehensive review of bus services in South Yorkshire, conducted by Clive Betts MP - looking at fares, services, integration with other transport, and conversion to zero-emissions vehicles;

- (j) believes that Greater Manchester's commitment to franchising is a major shot in the arm for reform, and that the city needs a structure that builds the service we need; and
- (k) believes that as we gradually transition and exit lockdown, we need to be actively encouraging people back onto the buses, and that the Government must recognise the need for increased support - for our Supertram and rail networks - as well as our buses.

3. DECLARING A BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes with alarm that:-
 - (i) according to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES), species extinction is running at between 10 and 100 times faster than historical averages;
 - (ii) the State of Nature 2019 UK report, published by a consortium of 70 nature organisations, finds that as little as 5% of land in the UK is being effectively looked after for nature, that 41% of species are in decline and 10% are threatened with extinction;
 - (iii) the UK only has half its biodiversity remaining, and is in the bottom 10% of countries on this measure; and
 - (iv) the RSPB reports that there are 40 million fewer birds in the UK than in 1970;
- (b) further notes that the biggest drivers of biodiversity decline nationally are climate change, habitat loss and intensive farming, and believes that, locally, mismanagement of moorland to the west of the city can be added;
- (c) believes that the health and well-being of the people of Sheffield depends crucially on maintaining a thriving and biodiverse natural environment;
- (d) commits to reviewing the findings of Sheffield Wildlife Trust's map of biodiversity corridors and to continue to review habitat management techniques, including the use of alternative approaches to pesticides;
- (e) commits to addressing this crucial issue but rejects a top-down prescriptive approach, as this issue is simply too important to rush through ill-thought-out and that, rather than as being solely prescribed by political parties, there is a need for a truly a collaborative approach – with real action - to ensure that everything possible is being done to protect the city's biodiversity, ecology and wildlife;
- (f) believes that it should not be for the Council alone to decide the terms of what an ecological and biodiversity emergency looks like, and how this should be dealt with and instead a collaborative approach needs to be developed which listens to wider views including key anchors and partners, including Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, Sheffield Climate Alliance, Wildscapes CIC and ShefFood Partnership and that, crucially, Sheffield citizens must be part of this conversation;

- (g) commits, therefore, to the development of a Sheffield Citizens Pledge, co-produced throughout the city, and that work on this should start from May, with wide consultation when safe to do so;
- (h) believes that we must work on a shared strategy to protecting Sheffield's ecology, including those who have previously petitioned on this issue, to deliver something really meaningful, that the whole city can get behind;
- (i) commits to negotiating with private landowners to initiate restoration of peat land and utilising natural flood management techniques to greatly reduce Sheffield residents and businesses exposure to flooding.
- (j) commits to working with landowners to adopt methods that encourage stabilisations and expansion of a biodiverse environment;
- (k) directs officers, in consultation with organisations such as Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, Wildscapes CIC and ShefFood Partnership, to draw up plans to reverse declines in species and habitats in Sheffield, reporting back in July 2021, paying particular attention to the opportunities for:-
 - (i) supporting education to make Sheffield gardens 'wildlife friendly', such as hedgehog tunnels in solid fence boundaries and cutting lawns later in the year so wildflowers can set seed;
 - (ii) encouraging planting green roofs and fences in urban areas to support invertebrates and pollinators and to reduce air pollution; and;
 - (iii) introducing a programme to install bird and/or bat boxes on Council-owned properties;
- (l) believes that rewilding is often best practice for supporting wildlife recovery;
- (m) believes that all residents should have local access to high value natural environments and that this is an important consideration for reducing inequalities in the city;
- (n) requests that local Household Waste Recycling Centres be kept open and accessible for as long as possible to help reduce the prevalence of fly-tipping and plastic pollution in sensitive habitats;
- (o) notes that the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill currently passing through Parliament gives greater powers to take strong, urgent action on both emergencies than the current Climate Change Act;
- (p) further notes that more than one hundred MPs have already pledged to support the Bill;
- (q) supports, therefore, the passing of the Bill;

- (r) requests officers to write to all Sheffield's MPs urging them to pledge to support the Bill; and
- (s) requests officers to write to the Environment Minister, the Rt. Hon. George Eustice MP, the President of the COP26 Climate Conference, the Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma MP, and the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson MP, informing them of this Council's support for the Bill and urging them to support it through Parliament.

4. THANKING THE CITY'S WORKERS AND DEMANDING PAY JUSTICE FOR THEM

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) believes that keyworkers have kept the city's essential services going, working alongside communities, mutual aid groups, voluntary services, faith groups, businesses and schools to provide support to those in need;
- (b) believes that thanks and gratitude should be given to all keyworkers, not just those at the NHS, but also the city's teachers, police, bus drivers, postal workers, and shop workers – plus many more;
- (c) believes it is inexcusable that the Government have frozen public sector pay for at least a year, and that whilst they clapped for key workers on the steps of Downing Street the Government are now turning their backs on them at the first opportunity;
- (d) notes that public sector workers have already seen their pay decrease in real terms over the last decade – due to pay freezes first enacted by the coalition government from 2010;
- (e) believes that, like all the city's key workers, care workers have given so much during the pandemic and we should all be grateful for their dedicated work;
- (f) notes that the city's carers often work in difficult working conditions with inadequate pay, and believes that care workers deserve a pay rise and, therefore, welcomes that from April this Administration is investing £4.2 million into the care sector to enable Sheffield's care workers to receive a pay rise;
- (g) notes that this investment is the first step in this Administration's ambition to achieve pay, conditions and a career path in line with NHS Healthcare Assistants, and the Council will work with the city's care providers to deliver this;
- (h) believes that all our workers are public service super-heroes - they keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our towns and cities running, and that without the professionalism and dedication of staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable;
- (i) believes that local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase, and the Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase and should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding has been cut to the bone, and who have not been offered adequate support through the Covid-19 pandemic;
- (j) notes that since 2010 there is a £475 million shortfall for council services due to central government funding cuts and increased service pressures – this is a huge

50% of the budget – and this is not even considering the current pandemic of which the full impact on council finances is not yet known;

- (k) resolves to support the pay claim submitted by GMB, Unison and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for a substantial increase with a minimum of 10 per cent uplift in April 2021, and calls on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim;
- (l) resolves to support the demands of the grassroots NHS Workers Say No to Public Sector Pay Inequality and Nurses United campaigns, including a restorative 15% pay rise for health and care workers on Agenda for Change contracts and for outsourced services in the NHS to be brought back in-house;
- (m) resolves to support the ongoing Moving Forwards on NHS Pay campaign, led by 14 trade unions representing more than 1.3 million members, to secure a fair pay rise for health and care workers;
- (n) requests the Chief Executive to write to the NHS Pay Review Body and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care with a copy of this motion requesting the above demands are met;
- (o) commits to writing to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government;
- (p) commits to meeting with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the Council can support the campaign; and
- (q) encourages all local government workers to join a union.