

### RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE MEETING

#### **1. HOUSING AND THE LOCAL PLAN**

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes that the population of Sheffield is predicted to grow by approximately 90,000 over the next twenty years and a shortage of decent housing will have a profound effect on economic growth, social mobility and health;
- (b) agrees that Sheffield will require more than 40,000 new homes over the next 20 years;
- (c) agrees that the location, mix and affordability of that housing will have a huge impact on the future prosperity and quality of life for its citizens;
- (d) notes that the Local Plan has been in development since 2012, with delay after delay leaving Sheffield in a position where we will become increasingly defenceless against inappropriate development;
- (e) notes the overwhelming public response to the 2020 Issues & Options Consultation in favour of higher density, walkable neighbourhoods primarily focussed in and around the city centre and Attercliffe;
- (f) further notes that development in these locations are particularly sustainable due to excellent transport links and existing infrastructure, and with good opportunities for affordable and accessible housing;
- (g) agrees that it must listen to the people of Sheffield and commits to developing a Local Plan based on this spatial strategy;
- (h) notes that due to the importance of protecting green spaces, the Council, under the previous Administration, undertook work to determine how the new homes in central Sheffield can be maximised - and following this work, Sheffield City Council produced a plan to meet the already high target of 40,000 new homes, whilst protecting the green belt;
- (i) reaffirms support for this approach, which would have delivered the correct number of homes for the city, whilst ensuring building in the right locations;
- (j) notes with real concern that cities in the North are now being forced by the Government to adhere to unrealistic house building targets, due to a U-turn which, we believe, was enacted to protect shires in the South;
- (k) notes that as a result of the Government's U-turn, Sheffield will now face a 35% increase in its nationally determined targets for new housing delivery;

- (l) believes that these Government-imposed targets are not appropriate to the scale of need, and threaten Sheffield's green belt, as well as undermining the good work undertaken by the Council in preparing a plan which would have provided enough homes and in the right locations;
- (m) notes that Sheffield City Council's Planning Committee has rejected a number of planning applications on green spaces, including in Loxley Valley, but the Government might in the future try and force through similar development, as they seek to take even more control on planning matters away from local councils;
- (n) believes that Sheffield facing a 35% increase on targets by the Government is a real concern for protecting our green spaces and will have an impact to the city's ecology and wildlife;
- (o) commits to challenging the Government and to making sure that we enact a Local Plan that delivers for Sheffield;
- (p) asks that a copy of the notice of motion is sent to Government to highlight our position, and to all Sheffield MP's, calling on them to stand up for Sheffield and fight in Parliament the unrealistically high housing demands imposed by the Government;
- (q) believes that Sheffield's Local Plan must include higher environmental and carbon reduction standards and stronger rules on affordable homes than at present;
- (r) believes that more housing is required – but it must be the right housing, of the right size, in the right place; that the target “number of dwellings” does nothing to address the complexity of housing need and that, whether set locally or nationally, any targets must be broken down by size of dwelling;
- (s) believes there needs to be more good quality, affordable housing to rent and more social housing; and
- (t) therefore recommends that the “affordable-free zone” for developers in the city centre, where profits go out of the city and few affordable homes are built, is removed.

## 2. INVESTING IN EARLY YEARS

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) believes that the early years are critical for a child's development and childcare is a fundamental building block of our economy and further believes that over the last decade, early years services have been neglected by the Government;
- (b) notes with concern the report 'Closed Doors' by Action for Children, which considered children's centre usage between 2014/15 and 2017/18 and stated "Despite the importance of children's centres to many families, their existence is under threat. Years of funding cuts have left councils with little choice but to reduce children's centre budgets. As resources become increasingly stretched, a number of centres have closed. Many of those that remain have been forced to reduce the level of service on offer.";
- (c) notes recent research which highlights that nationally over 1,000 Sure Start Centres have been lost since 2010 and believes that this is the legacy of the coalition government's reckless austerity policies targeting cuts at children most in need, and in addition, notes that 12,000 early education and childcare providers have been lost since 2015 and 30,000 more early years providers are at risk of closure within a year;
- (d) is concerned that the sector has been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19 and believes that, although early years providers were relied upon to enable key workers to continue to work during the pandemic, they received insufficient financial protection;
- (e) welcomes that Sheffield City Council provided additional support for the publicly funded hours (over and above national guidance), however, believes that the Government failed early years providers providing little support for the paid provision;
- (f) is concerned that the insufficient increase in funding, historical underfunding, increasing costs and impact of Covid-19, means that early years' providers in Sheffield will be faced with financial sustainability issues across the childcare sector and that it is also becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff due to the early years providers' inability to pay competitive rates;
- (g) believes Sheffield continues to be underfunded as compared to other local authorities, with the disparity in Sheffield's hourly Funded Early Learning (FEL) rate compared to other core cities, with Bristol receiving £5.69 an hour for three and four year olds, which is 21% higher than Sheffield's rate of £4.71 per hour; Nottingham receives £5.06 per hour, Newcastle £5.05, Manchester £5.01, Leeds £4.95 and Birmingham £4.85, and only Liverpool receives less, at £4.69;
- (h) notes that Sheffield also receives a lower rate for two year olds at £5.36 per hour, compared to £5.59 in Bristol, £5.46 in Manchester, £5.40 in Birmingham, £5.39 in Nottingham and £5.38 in Liverpool, with Leeds and Manchester also receiving £5.36 per hour;

- (i) supports Sheffield trade unions in their petition to Government to significantly increase funding in Early Years, which states that the current levels of funding for early years education and care are insufficient to provide the high quality services young children in Sheffield deserve, and supports their call for:-
  - (i) increased investment to ensure Sheffield deploys the highly qualified workforce required to improve the quality of service to young children;
  - (ii) recognition of the professional role of early years workers; and
  - (iii) fair pay for all early years workers that properly rewards their skills and qualification;
- (j) calls on the Government to address this disparity and provide Sheffield with a fair funding deal in addition to the additional investment needed to ensure every child can recover the learning and social development lost in the pandemic and has the chance to reach their full potential;
- (k) further to (i), will write to Sheffield's MPs to lobby the Government to demand parity for Sheffield's children as compared with those of other cities;
- (l) calls on the Government to commission an independent review of childcare funding and affordability;
- (m) commits to publicly thanking early years practitioners and support staff in the city for caring for children while other services in the city were closed, recognising that their pay, terms and conditions are not commensurate with that of teachers of older children;
- (n) welcomes and commends the partnership between Sheffield Hallam University, Watercliffe Meadow School, Sheffield City Council, and Save the Children UK, which has led to a Early Years Community Research Centre opening in Shirecliffe and commits to looking at innovative ways to fund similar centres in lieu of much-needed central government funding;
- (o) recalls, however, this Council's past choices to close Surestart centres and cut grants to outstanding community nurseries in the most deprived parts of the city where market forces do not support commercial private-sector nursery businesses;
- (p) recognises that the current moment in time is an important point for reflection and collaboration so that the experiences and learning of the last 18 months is not lost;
- (q) recognises that families and children receiving Universal Credit and legacy benefits; asylum seekers, people with no recourse to public funds, speakers of English as an additional language and limited access to the internet, are disproportionately affected by the lack of provision in Early Years and that this has been exacerbated by the pandemic; and
- (r) therefore, commits to bringing stakeholders together from across the city for an open session to discuss approaches to current challenges and share practice.

### **3. A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE**

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes that in 2018, at COP24, the UK Government signed up to having 'domestic institutional arrangements, public participation and engagement with local communities' so localities can play their part in delivering the UK's 'Nationally Determined Contributions' in the Paris Climate Agreement;
- (b) further notes that, in May 2021, the Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma MP, President of COP26, said collaboration would be a key objective of the climate summit - "Governments, business and civil society (sometimes called 'non-state actors' and including local government) need to work together to transform the ways we power our homes and businesses, grow our food, develop infrastructure and move ourselves and goods around";
- (c) believes that, despite these agreements and statements, there is still no formal relationship allowing joint partnership working between Local and National Government on climate action recognising the importance of local government in achieving net zero across the world, and notes that globally, the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) have called for COP26 to be recognised as the 'Multilevel Action COP' in acknowledgment of the fact that more than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions - decisions that are made at a local and individual level;
- (d) therefore resolves to add this Council's voice to calls by the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport, and others, for a joint local and national government taskforce to plan action to reach 'net zero' emissions; such a partnership can set appropriate regulations, benchmarks and targets and create the much needed long-term funding mechanisms to enable local communities and economies to decarbonise whilst remaining resilient and sustainable;
- (e) calls for the inclusion of a dedicated chapter for local governments in the official agreement reached at COP26, recognising the importance of local government in co-designing and delivering climate action and to ensure that local government is politically and financially empowered to meet that ambition;
- (f) will therefore ask the Chief Executive to write to Alok Sharma MP, President for COP26, the Prime Minister, and the Leadership Board of the LGA, informing them of our support for a joint Local/National Government Climate Change Partnership Taskforce and asking for one to be established as soon as possible;
- (g) believes that the Government needs to get serious about their supposed 'levelling-up' agenda and support local authorities, by delivering regional investment banks – to support councils in creating jobs and building the energy and transport infrastructure we so desperately need;

- (h) notes that the Council has always sought to work with government in delivering positive action in tackling the climate emergency, and protecting against its adverse effects;
- (i) notes, for instance, the multi-million-pound investment in flood defences, and that this Council is building today for tomorrow's changed climate, and that the Council's long-term plan is needed to deliver Natural Flood Measures, but these measures will need investment to maintain and develop, and calls on the Government to support us with substantially more investment in delivering this;
- (j) believes that the Government needs to implement radical waste management strategies and that for too long they have failed to act on this issue, when they should be supporting councils to kick start new clean industrial sectors - reclaiming and retaining energy at every step of a product's life cycle;
- (k) notes the extension to Household Waste Recycling Centre opening times, but this comes at cost to the Council and believes that the Government needs to significantly invest in Sheffield to deliver 21st Century Waste Recycling Centres with a focus on sustainability;
- (l) believes that the Government should provide investment to deliver bio-gas facilities to reduce our national dependency on extractive gas imports, and greater investment to push forward with hydrogen and renewables to reduce carbon emissions from home heating, and reduce carbon emissions whilst housing infrastructure is made fit for the future;
- (m) believes that the Government must offer tax incentives for homegrown companies to develop the energy infrastructure of not only tomorrow, but today;
- (n) believes we need a significant and long-term funding commitment from the Government so that all Council homes can be improved to take them from Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C to net zero, as the current funding arrangements leave a shortfall of funding required which local authorities are unfairly having to pick up;
- (o) calls on the Government to commit to increasing funding on new homes to ensure that homes are built at net zero, and that the biggest challenge in the city for achieving residential net zero is the private sector (rented and owner occupied) with currently little funding available to deal with the cost of retrofitting;
- (p) believes that the current piecemeal funding strategy of the Government creates unrealistic delivery timeframes, and they should provide much more support and long-term planning to allow councils to invest sustainably and responsibly in tackling the climate emergency; and
- (q) requests that Sheffield, in committing to the ambitious targets as set out in the 'ARUP' report, sets clear targets with a review of progress towards its self-declared Climate Goals being reported to the appropriate committee on an annual basis, together with any actions required to maintain the Council's commitments.

**4. “RIGHT TO FOOD” – WORKING TOGETHER TO TACKLE FOOD POVERTY IN THE CITY AND TO DEVELOP A LOCAL FOOD ACCESS PLAN**

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) recognises that we are seeing a crisis of food poverty borne out of political choices and systemic failings from successive governments since austerity began;
- (b) believes that food poverty should never be seen as inevitable, and notes that from 1997 to 2010 poverty reduced significantly (for instance the Institute for Fiscal Studies notes that the number of children in relative poverty fell by over 1.1 million from 1997-2010), showing that with sufficient political willpower these issues can be tackled;
- (c) notes that after a decade of government-imposed austerity, child poverty and food hunger has increased significantly, and led to a precarious situation for many, even before the pandemic struck;
- (d) believes that the pandemic has exacerbated problems and pushed more people into food poverty, with perhaps the worst yet to come, and though it is hard to quantify the extent of food poverty in Sheffield we know the following:-
  - (i) around 24,000 children are currently eligible for Free School Meals and therefore at risk of going hungry during the school holidays, with this number rising; and
  - (ii) according to data collected by Voluntary Action Sheffield from 19 food banks, between 13th April 2020 and 8th June 2020 the number of households supported increased by just over 92% from 1144 to 2202 households; it is well acknowledged that this does not represent the full picture of emergency food aid during this time – and shows supply, not level of need, which could be much higher;
- (e) condemns the Government for the £20 per week cut to Universal Credit, which will come into effect from 6th October 2021, noting the following:-
  - (i) universal credit is claimed by more than 5.5 million households across the UK;
  - (ii) the Joseph Rowntree Foundation - a charity which researches poverty - states millions of households will face an income loss equivalent to £1,040 a year;
  - (iii) the charity Citizens Advice has warned that a third of people on Universal Credit will end up in debt due to the reduction, which will inevitably lead to more people being reliant on food banks; and

- (iv) the 5-week wait for Universal Credit impacts people's ability to pay bills and buy food, and believes that this wait is wholly unjustifiable and should be scrapped;
- (f) calls on the Government to address the 5-week wait for Universal Credit, using its resources to reduce this to less than one week to stop families in Sheffield falling into a debt trap that they may not get out of;
- (g) notes the plight of carers who have performed heroic efforts to look after our most vulnerable in society during the pandemic;
- (h) also calls on the Government to raise the Carer's Allowance by £1000 a year in line with the Universal Credit uplift, and not what this Council believes to be the insultingly low 5p a day announced in April, allowing our carers, many of whom are young people, to not slide into poverty, with recent research suggesting a third struggle to make ends meet;
- (i) notes that the cross-party Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee established a working group to look at the Council's response to Food Poverty in Sheffield, and that this first phase looked at the Council's strategic role in relation to food poverty, and with organisations working in this space on food projects;
- (j) believes that all recommendations from the Food Poverty Working Group's report should be adopted in full;
- (k) believes that, as noted in the Scrutiny Committee's report, tackling food poverty requires a citywide effort, across the Council and public services, the VCF, communities and business, with a long term, structural approach to find lasting solutions and that, as such, the Council should adopt a Local Food Access Plan;
- (l) believes that this would help the Council, community organisations and other partners to work together to identify risks, assess the current response and coordinate action, with an understanding that those involved can achieve more by acting together than they could by acting separately, and helping to strengthen 'food poverty alliances' (the many different networks in the city working to combat food poverty and hunger);
- (m) believes that tackling food poverty is not a standalone issue and is underpinned by wider socio-economic factors, and as such the development of a Food Access Plan must be part of the Council's forthcoming Poverty Summit, which will in turn lead to the development of co-ordinated work to tackle inequality in the city;
- (n) gives its support to The Right to Food campaign, a national campaign which argues that the 11 million people in food poverty should be central to this strategy, and that 'Right to Food' should be enshrined into law - clarifying government's obligations on food poverty and introducing legal avenues to hold government bodies accountable for violations;
- (o) calls for the 'Right to Food' to be incorporated into an amendment to the forthcoming Government White Paper in response to the National Food Strategy, and asks the Leader of the Council to write to the Government to make this case;

- (p) commits to developing a Food Strategy linking the need to reduce carbon to meet climate change targets and boosting biodiversity to protect nature, along with developing a wellbeing economy and improving health equality across the city;
- (q) notes that research evidence shows that urban agriculture provides many benefits in addition to food provision; and these include:-
- Improving human health through physical exercise and a more nutritious diet
  - Mental health benefits of being outside and engaging in community
  - Protecting soil, improving soil quality, and maintaining carbon storage in soil
  - Improving and enhancing biodiversity
  - Increasing food supply resilience against climate and economic events
  - Reducing food miles and food waste
  - Supporting plant genetic diversity
  - Reducing urban heat island effects
  - Paid employment and training opportunities
  - Community empowerment
  - Reducing poverty
  - Improving community cohesion
  - Feeding urban communities sustainably
- (r) commits to working with local organisations like ShefFood, Heeley City Farm, FoodWorks, the University of Sheffield, and others, to develop a Food Strategy to support a rapid increase in urban and peri urban food production;
- (s) will seek to protect the use of greenbelt land around Sheffield for sustainable agriculture and nature;
- (t) notes that there are now 2,000 food banks across the UK, and believes that in the 6th richest country in the world this is an absolute disgrace;
- (u) notes that food bank usage has increased during the pandemic, but the preceding decade of austerity meant millions of people were already needing to rely on them - for example, 1.6 million emergency food parcels were distributed by the Trussell Trust in 2019;
- (v) believes that main reasons for referrals to food banks are changes made since 2010 to the benefit system – including payment cuts, delays to benefit payments, and punitive benefit sanctions – as well as the rise of increasingly insecure work and in-work poverty;
- (w) calls on the Government to commit to eradicate food bank usage within three years and reduce usage by half within 12 months; and
- (x) thanks all food banks in Sheffield for their work, and commits to doing everything we can to support them in their invaluable work for communities.

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