

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – 1ST NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE MEETING

1. STOPPING GENOCIDE IN GAZA

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

(a) notes:-

- (i) its unanimous vote in September 2019 to recognise Palestine as a sovereign state, the first Council to do so;
- (ii) that East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and Gaza are illegally occupied by Israel; and that Gaza has been subject to 16 years of blockade;
- (iii) that the Israeli Government has been withholding essential resources from Gaza and what UN Experts have described as “destroying or damaging homes, hospitals, markets and UN Reliefs and Works Agency (UNRWA)” and that Amnesty International has “documented unlawful Israeli attacks, including indiscriminate attacks, which caused mass civilian casualties and must be investigated as war crimes”;
- (iv) Save The Children have highlighted that the number of children reported killed in Gaza in the last three weeks has surpassed the annual number of children killed across the world's conflict zones since 2019;
- (v) that under Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, genocide is defined as certain acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” and that, under Article I, the UK has confirmed that genocide is a crime under international law which it undertakes to prevent and to punish;
- (vi) the UK, at the UN Security Council on 18 October 2023, refused to vote for “humanitarian pauses” to deliver lifesaving aid to millions in Gaza; and
- (vii) Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, B'tselem and the South African government recognise that the Israeli Government is enacting a system of apartheid;

(b) deeply regrets and condemns the tragic loss of civilian life in both the Hamas terrorist attacks on the 7th of October and the ensuing bombardment of the Gaza strip by Israel;

- (c) notes that these horrific events have had a huge effect on many Sheffield citizens, in particular those with relatives and friends in the region;
- (d) calls for the immediate release of all Israeli hostages;
- (e) believes:-
 - (i) there can be no justification for the loss of innocent lives, and all atrocities committed against civilians must be condemned and investigated;
 - (ii) that Hamas' appalling murder of civilians in Israel must be unequivocally condemned, and we continue to call for the safe release of all hostages;
 - (iii) that the Israeli Government's indiscriminate killing of Palestinian civilians must be unequivocally condemned;
 - (iv) all forms of racism, including anti-Palestinian racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia have no place in our city and condemns any attacks on Palestinian, Jewish or Muslim people;
 - (v) Sir Keir Starmer was wrong to say, in an interview with LBC radio, that Israel "does have that right" to withhold food, water and electricity from Gaza, and he should apologise and retract this statement supporting collective punishment;
 - (vi) we must not allow these tragic events to divide our communities at home, and we understand and feel the pain of all people in Sheffield, especially the Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities;
 - (vii) all political leaders have a responsibility to try to prevent genocide;
 - (viii) all UK political leaders must call upon the Israeli Government to ensure enough food, water, medicine and electricity is provided to Gaza, that there must be clear humanitarian corridors, and that all actors must follow and be held accountable under international law;
 - (ix) every effort must be made by the international community to make a two-state solution a reality, which requires a commitment to a formal peace process, an end to the occupation and for all parties to follow international law, in order to bring peace to the region;
 - (x) that where Palestinians are forced to flee, they must not be permanently displaced from their homes, and calls on the UK Government to use all available pressure to ensure this;
 - (xi) any state has a right to protect its citizens from attacks and terror, subject to international law;
 - (xii) there is ultimately no military solution to this conflict;
 - (xiii) innocent Palestinians must not pay the price for Hamas atrocities; and

- (xiv) the world has a duty to prevent civilian deaths;
- (f) regrets any hurt caused by flying the Israeli flag from the Town Hall, and calls for a review of the Council's flag-flying protocol;
- (g) regrets the UK Government's abstention at the UN against supporting a sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities;
- (h) condemns the decision by Israel to cut off essential supplies of water, food, and electricity, to the 2.2m residents of the Gaza strip;
- (i) condemns all hate crime against Palestinians, Israelis, Jewish or Muslim people;
- (j) welcomes the generous humanitarian fundraising from Sheffield communities over the last few days, in particular fundraising for aid to Gaza;
- (k) affirms its support for a two state solution and a lasting peace, which will allow the people of Israel and Palestine to live free from fear; and
- (l) therefore resolves to:-
 - (i) call upon the UK Government to:-
 - (A) call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, in order to facilitate an intense period of diplomacy, bring humanitarian aid into Gaza, and provide an opportunity to seek the immediate release of all Israeli hostages;
 - (B) call for an immediate ceasefire and to vote for this at the UN;
 - (C) cease all arms sales to Israel and end military aid for Israel; and
 - (D) make every effort to resume the peace process;
 - (ii) request that the Chief Executive submits this Motion to the UK Government; and
 - (iii) request that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee consider whether the Council should join the Sheffield Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid.

2. REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COUNCIL COMMITTEES

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes the information set out in the report of the Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement on the review of the allocation of seats on the Council's Committees following the recent change to the composition of the Council;
- (b) notes the initial allocation, before final adjustment, of seats to political groups on the individual committees which are subject to proportional balance, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and which is based on the committees (and their sizes) which were approved at the annual meeting of the Council on 17th May 2023 for operation in the Municipal Year 2023-24;
- (c) gives approval for (i) the size of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to be increased from 11 seats to 13 seats in order to ensure that sufficient seats are available for all Policy Committee Chairs, the Finance Committee Chair and the Deputy Leader of the Council, whilst maintaining political proportionality; this being in accordance with the view expressed by the Governance Committee in its report on the 6 month review of the Council's governance arrangements, submitted to the annual meeting of the Council on 17th May 2023, which stated that the Deputy Leader should sit on Strategy and Resources Policy Committee and, should the Deputy Leader not be a Policy Committee Chair, their appointment should be facilitated through existing mechanisms around appointments to ensure political proportionality and (ii) the size of the Governance Committee to be reduced from 11 seats to 9 seats to retain the existing 180 seats in total across all the Council's Committees that are subject to political proportionality;
- (d) in order to (i) satisfy the requirement to ensure that the total number of seats on the ordinary committees of the Council are allocated to each political group in the same proportion as the group's membership of the Council and (ii) accommodate a request made by Councillor Lewis Chinchon to move from membership of the Licensing Committee to membership of the Audit and Standards Committee, gives approval to the final adjustments of seats as shown in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
- (e) approves the appointment of Members to Council Committees for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023-24 to reflect the arrangements now agreed and the wishes of the political groups, in accordance with the list of proposed memberships circulated at the meeting, and including substitutes where appropriate, (ii) for the purposes of Council Procedure Rule 25.6, gives the consent of the Council in any case where a Member chooses not to be appointed to serve on any Policy or Regulatory Committee and (iii) notes that, where changes are to be made to the composition or membership of sub-committees of Policy Committees, these will need to be formally approved at the next meeting of their parent Policy Committee;

- (f) appoints Councillor Glynis Chapman to serve as Joint Chair of the Planning and Highways Committee, in place of Councillor Mike Chaplin, for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023/24;
- (g) appoints Councillor Marianne Elliot to serve as Deputy Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee in place of Councillor Janet Ridler, for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023/24, and notes that Councillor Janet Ridler will act as the Spokesperson for the Labour Group on that Committee;
- (h) appoints Councillor Fran Belbin to serve as Deputy Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023/24, in view of the fact that the current Deputy Chair (Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards) is no longer a member of the Committee;
- (i) notes that, as respects the appointment of Members to serve on Council Committees, where vacancies exist or in cases of urgency to ensure quoracy or representation, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the relevant political group whip, has the authority to appoint Members to serve on such Committees, as necessary, on the understanding that details of such appointments will be reported to the next or subsequent meetings of the Council; and
- (j) in light of the change to the composition of the Council, approves a change to the order in which Notices of Motion shall be listed on the Council Summons for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal Year, as set out below and which entitles the new Sheffield Community Councillors Group (SCC) to submit a Notice of Motion during the year –

Current Order:

November – Green / Labour / LibDem / Labour

December – LibDem / Labour / LibDem / Other (Ind)

February 2024 – Labour / LibDem / Green / Labour

Revised Order:

November – Green / Labour / LibDem / Labour

December – LibDem / Labour / LibDem / Other (Ind)

February 2024 – Labour / LibDem / Green / Sheffield Community Councillors

3. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR CARE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes the campaign to make care experience a protected characteristic and the drive to extend Corporate Parenting beyond Children's Social Care;
- (b) notes the Council has:-
 - (i) developed a Voice and Influence Team which employs a group of Care Experienced Young People to deliver a range of consultation, training, and scrutiny activities to ensure the voice of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People are central to service development and decision making;
 - (ii) a "Staying Close" project to enable Care Leavers to enjoy enhanced support to independence;
 - (iii) continued to support friendships and tackle loneliness with a programme of free activities and events;
 - (iv) implemented a new Pathway Plan snapshot document; this enables Care Leavers to clearly see their agreed plan as they transition to independence;
 - (v) developed a range of work experience, training and apprenticeship offers for Care Experienced young people; and
 - (vi) provided a full Tenancy Ready Programme to prepare Care Experienced young people for managing their own accommodation and award priority status to Care Leavers;
- (c) believes:-
 - (i) that despite the resilience of Care Experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account;
 - (ii) Care Experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system;
 - (iii) as corporate parent, the Council has a responsibility to provide the best possible care and safeguard children who are looked after by us as an Authority;
 - (iv) Councillors should be champions of our looked after children and young people and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exist; and
 - (v) the Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to have due regard to the need to:-

(A) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

(B) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and

(C) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and

(d) therefore resolves to request that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, as part of the forthcoming Equalities Framework, consider:-

- (i) introducing a requirement that, when making any policy decisions, the Council recognises Care Experienced people are a vulnerable group who face discrimination;
- (ii) treating care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic so that future services and policies consider care experience through Equality Impact Assessments;
- (iii) putting the needs of vulnerable people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration;
- (iv) calling upon other bodies to support the Council in its Corporate Parenting responsibility for children in care and care experienced people until such time as it may be introduced by legislation;
- (v) formally supporting the LGA's Step Ahead campaign;
- (vi) continuing to build on the existing ringfenced apprenticeship opportunities for care experienced people by committing to an agreed number of apprenticeships places each year delivered through the Council's levy funding;
- (vii) taking an intersectional approach and commit to tackling the systemic discrimination and disproportionality faced by specific groups of care experienced people;
- (viii) the impact on people with other protected characteristics such as race, sexual orientation or disability, as well as issues of intersectional or multiple discrimination;
- (ix) the scope for a trial scheme for a basic income pilot for care leavers, as piloted by the Welsh Government; and
- (x) requesting the Government to ensure full funding that is needed to meet all the recommendations of the independent review of children's social care by Josh MacAlister.

4. REGULATING THE SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION SECTOR

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes with alarm the significant projected overspend of £8.4m due to a shortfall in DWP subsidy for our Housing Benefit bill, which has increased rapidly, and specifically:-
 - (i) notes that £4.9m of this overspend is due to increased Council homeless placements in B&B's and hotels, and reaffirms its support for increasing social housing stock, work on void performance, and working with partner organisations to expand available housing to relieve homelessness;
 - (ii) notes that £3.5m of this overspend is due to increased numbers of people using exempt Supported Accommodation (SA), which is not commissioned by the Council or regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), and notes that £2.6m of the overspend within supported accommodation is due to placements by a single provider, which has reportedly provided just one hour of support to residents per fortnight; and
 - (iii) notes that the need for the regulation of the Supported Accommodation sector was identified in 2020 by Steve McCabe MP who highlighted concerns about the growing number of exempt accommodation providers housing vulnerable people without any expertise or experience and so launched the Supported Accommodation Bill to legislate for proper checks on the support provided by these registered providers, a fit and proper check on potential landlords and the standard of accommodation to ensure all tenants are safe and receive appropriate support;
- (b) notes that:-
 - (i) serious concerns have been raised around the quality of support provided in the unregulated Exempt SA sector, with a Select Committee report stating that *"in the worst instances the system involves the exploitation of vulnerable people who should be receiving support, while unscrupulous providers make excessive profits by capitalising on loopholes [...] all paid for by taxpayers through housing benefit"*; and
 - (ii) despite limited information due to a nationwide lack of regulation, similar concerns have been raised within Sheffield, with one former provider perpetrating *"institutional financial abuse of residents"*, and one large currently operating provider prosecuted for providing *"unsafe and unsatisfactory accommodation"*;
- (c) (i) notes that the Local Government Association (LGA) wants to see a locally-led fully funded oversight and enforcement regime for exempt accommodation within a strengthened national regulatory framework, stating that this should include a requirement for all exempt accommodation providers to be Registered Providers, and ensure that councils' responses can be tailored to the challenges they face and the contexts of local housing markets and demand; and

- (ii) further notes that the LGA has highlighted that most councils' concerns about non-commissioned exempt accommodation could also be addressed by establishing council control over all referrals into exempt accommodation supported housing in their area;
- (d) believes that good quality SA is necessary to support residents and relieve the crisis in homeless provision, however, believes that low quality supported accommodation is seriously harmful to vulnerable people and detrimental to the Council's finances;
- (e) notes the loss of 32,245 Council homes through Right to Buy and believes the transfer of so many homes from the public sector to private landlords through the consequences of this policy is one of the drivers of the current record levels of homelessness and use of temporary accommodation;
- (f) believes that this Council is currently doing what it can to increase the amount of social housing, despite all parties having to face the reality of inflation in the construction sector and the consequent reduction in the expected number of new homes that can be built;
- (g) believes that not everyone gets the same chance in housing and recognises that many groups, such as refugees, are more likely to experience homelessness than people who are not refugees and may also experience worse standards when living in temporary accommodation;
- (h) notes incoming new Local Authority powers from the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act (subject to consultation), including:-
 - (i) an obligation to develop a SA strategy; and
 - (ii) a potential discretionary power to introduce a licensing scheme for exempt SA; and
- (i) therefore, resolves to ask the Housing Policy Committee to:-
 - (i) engage with Government consultation and consider supporting the introduction of a SA licensing scheme in Sheffield;
 - (ii) consider investigating whether the largest exempt accommodation providers are providing quality support for vulnerable people, and value for money for Sheffield taxpayers;
 - (iii) consider whether to introduce a policy to require future tendered services to avoid referring into non-registered exempt supported accommodation where possible; and
 - (iv) consider writing to the Government requesting reform to Housing Benefit subsidy regulations to remove this financial burden.

5. STOPPING THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT SEWAGE POLLUTION SCANDAL

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

(a) notes that:-

- (i) under this Government, water companies have increasingly polluted waters and coastal waters across the country with filthy raw sewage;
- (ii) people are appalled by disgusting sewage discharges into our rivers and coastal waters;
- (iii) this Government has slashed the monitoring of water pollution, enforcement actions and prosecutions;
- (iv) in particular, staff at the Environment Agency dedicated to responding to pollution incidents have seen their numbers decline by 15% since 2015;
- (v) in Parliament, Conservative MPs have consistently failed to support tougher measures to stop the sewage scandal;
- (vi) in 2022, there were 1335 spills counted in Penistone and Stocksbridge constituency lasting for 7,161 hours; and the local Conservative MP, Miriam Cates, has voted against ending the sewage scandal;
- (vii) sewage and pollution in our rivers and coastal waters harm wildlife, hurt the visitor economy and can cause illness;
- (viii) Welsh Water, a public benefit company, was recently criticised for illegal discharge of untreated sewage from sewage treatment works over several years; and
- (ix) as reported by The Guardian newspaper, £57bn has been handed out in payouts to shareholders over the last 30 years;

(b) believes that:-

- (i) the people of Sheffield are proud of our rivers and deserve high quality water standards;
- (ii) people using and enjoying our rivers and waterways – wild swimmers, anglers, walkers, kayakers – should not have to put up with sewage and pollution in our waters;
- (iii) volunteer ‘river ranger’ groups in Sheffield that monitor the health of our rivers do amazing work and deserve our praise and thanks;
- (iv) thousands of voluntary River Rangers, Citizen Scientists and active swimmers, kayakers, anglers and walkers, armed with the invaluable

data supplied by the Rivers Trust and other researchers, are contributing to monitoring water quality;

- (v) it is a sad state of affairs that citizens have felt compelled to take action themselves to monitor sewage and pollution in our water due to government inaction;
- (vi) high profile campaigners like Feargal Sharkey and Paul Whitehouse have done excellent work to raise awareness about sewage in our rivers;
- (vii) all discharges of raw sewage from sewage treatment works should result in significant fines and the fines reinvested in improvements, as was the case before 2015;
- (viii) retention tanks should be constructed at all sensitive storm overflow sites;
- (ix) a rising tide of sewage discharges, such as the discharges in Sheffield by the Lady's Bridge into the River Don, threaten projects to support reintroducing salmon and trout to our rivers; and
- (x) shareholder payouts and CEO bonuses need to be halted with immediate effect where water quality is substandard;

(c) resolves to ask the Government to:-

- (i) clean up our rivers and end the sewage scandal;
- (ii) make polluters pay by committing to resourcing the Environment Agency to effectively monitor and guide the water industry and agriculture, including a restoration of staff resources and a much more aggressive and focussed approach to enforcement and prosecution, working closely with voluntary organisations;
- (iii) hold Yorkshire Water to account to ensure they are investing in our water infrastructure and improving water quality; and
- (iv) ban water company executive bonuses until sewage discharges and serious leaks end; and

(d) resolves to pro-actively consider every opportunity to implement nature based solutions in Sheffield that reduce the amount of rain in the sewage system to reduce flood and pollution risk, creating more vegetated green land, wetlands, Sustainable urban Drainage Schemes (SuDS) and rain gardens on council land and buildings.

6. APPOINTMENT TO CHIEF OFFICER POST – APPROVAL OF SALARY PACKAGE

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes the information contained in the report now submitted on the recruitment exercise and salary package for the post of Director of People and Culture; and
- (b) approves the total salary range for that post, in the range £99,784 to £106,960.