

CITY OF SHEFFIELD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 6TH DECEMBER 2023

COPIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THERETO

Question of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q. How many people are known to be waiting for their formal apology in connection with the Street Trees Inquiry?

A. With the exception of those people who provided undertakings to the council or who were served an injunction, all formal apologies are either complete or scheduled. Those people who contacted the dedicated street trees inbox to request a written apology have all been provided with one. All those who have requested an in-person apology have received one, with the exception of two individuals whose apologies have been deferred to later in December at their request and one person to whom dates have been offered but has not responded.

The situation with regard to those who provided undertakings or who were served an injunction is as follows:

Two people who were subject to the committal proceedings have been in direct contact about an apology and have engaged about the apology and how it might be framed. They are waiting for the draft apology to be provided to them.

There are a further 11 individuals who the Council started proceedings against who either had an initial apology in July, or the Council did not have contact details to send the apology at that same time. These people are in a similar position and following discussion the Council has agreed that it will determine outstanding complaints from some of these before finalising revised apology wording for all of them. The complaints are being considered under the Council's complaints system.

Question of Councillor Sue Alston to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

The Sheffield City Partnership presented some 'City Goals' last week. Please can you tell me:

Q.1 What has been the cost of producing these goals? Including officer time, production costs and any other expenses incurred.

A.1 The Sheffield City Goals have not been led by Sheffield City Council. The Goals aren't held by any single organisation, group or person, but are something that our city owns and stewards, together.

Over the past eight months, partners across civic, private and community sectors have come together, to listen, learn and work together to understand what our city stands for, what we want our city to be now and in the future. This included; an Online Survey which received over 1500 responses, 28 different workshops hosted by multiple city stakeholders, 17 sessions with communities and community, and sessions across all Local Area Committees.

The City Goals process has seen an investment of time from many people across the city. The costs of the sessions in venues, production costs and time, have been shared by a range of stakeholders from across the City. Sheffield City Council officers have supported this process as one of the partners involved. We do not have a record of the amount of officer time that has been spent on this work, however teams from across Economic Strategy in City Futures, and from the Policy and Partnerships team in Policy and Democratic Engagement have invested significant time and expertise into the process, in addition to general workload. Other teams from across the council have supported work around the City Goals, including (but not limited to) the Youth Engagement team in Community Youth Services, and the Communications team.

In terms of direct costs; to support the City Goals process the Council secured £126,000 from the SYMCA feasibility fund to support the development of the goals. This was utilised to competitively procure external consultancy support to support the partner led Task and Finish group, chaired by Angela Foulkes, Chief Executive of Sheffield College. In addition, the venue costs for 5 community and business events were supported by SCC at the cost of £2,900.

Approximately £5,000 of SCC resource has been used to support communications activity as part of the public conversation phase to ensure that as many people in the city as possible are aware of the draft goals and are able to comment and feedback on them.

Q.2 How will these goals make a PRACTICAL difference to the work of this council.? Or to other bodies in this city?

A.2 The City Goals serve as Sheffield's 'North Stars', providing a consistent, shared view across public, private, and VCF organisations, with communities and citizens about where we're trying to get to as a city. Being able to speak with one voice as a city will help in dialogue that we have with SYMCA, National Government, Anchor Institutions, Funding Bodies and

Investors, to elicit confidence in the City's future vision and support our bids and asks for investment and partnership working.

The purpose of the City Goals is to act as a platform for anyone and everyone – city & regional institutions, businesses, charity & community organisations and individual citizens – to play a role in tackling the challenges we face and making change happen in Sheffield. They are intended to empower residents and communities to work collectively in creating a better future for the city. The Goals will facilitate the alignment of existing resources, co-investment into new shared priorities, the building of new collaborative capabilities and ways of working across partners, communities and residents.

Throughout the City Goals process, stakeholders and partners are getting ready to adopt, support and pledge to support the delivery of the goals. For example;

Angela Foulkes, Chief Executive and Principal of The Sheffield College (TSC) says:

- “At TSC we will be reviewing and restating our corporate strategy for 2025-2030 and will be aligning it, as appropriate, to the goals. In practical terms that means that we will be using the 18 goals in the development of our strategy and in setting our key metrics and outcomes.
- We will also be ensuring that we are contributing to positive action in terms of delivering the goals, for example we fully anticipate taking a lead role in the engagement of young people. We would expect to be ensuring that young people at college have the chance to engage, share their views and hold leaders to account across the city.”

Alexis Krachai, Vice President and Board Member, Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry says:

- ‘We have developed our institutional objectives so they can be aligned to the City Goals once they are finalised. We set a 5 year vision for the Chamber in 2021 but we intentionally deferred setting too many details down pending the City Goals. This is about creating the conditions for alignment.
- Once the City Goals are agreed and a framework for delivery is designed then Chamber resources committed to civic objectives can be aligned to the wider objectives of the city. An absence of the City Goals means that resources are misaligned across institutions. Scarce resources could be utilised in a suboptimal way. Opportunities are missed.
- The City Goals have changed the terms of the conversation within the Chamber; particularly at Board level and within our representative Chamber Council. The Chamber is becoming more actively engaged in the direction of the city because we have more confidence that the Council and anchor institutions are working on a more inclusive basis to arrive at a series of City Goals that the city can work together as

one. The Council's leadership on City Goals is changing the basis upon which the city comes together to face the future with confidence.'

For Sheffield City Council, the forthcoming Council Plan (due to be considered by Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 13 December) will set out how we will play our part in delivering the City Goals, with the draft outcomes in that plan clearly aligned to the ambitions set out in the Goals. I thank all members that have been involved in the work to develop the Goals. However, we are all clear that the Goals cannot be achieved by council action alone, they will require concerted collaborative effort across partners and communities. It is our hope that other organisations will similarly endorse and align their plans and strategies to the City Goals ambitions.

Q.3 Does the Sheffield City Partnership have Terms of Reference or similar statement of its composition and purpose and, if so, where can I find it?

A.3 Sheffield City Partnership sets out on its website (www.sheffieldcitypartnership.org) its statement of purpose and composition. The purpose of the partnership is as follows:

"The City Partnership is committed to effective collaboration, aiming to ensure that the key organisations and leaders in Sheffield are working together to build effective and inclusive solutions to the challenges facing the city, share responsibility, and ensure that Sheffield is fully grasping all opportunities. The City Partnership will foster a culture of optimism and trust, building on what is already happening and achievements within Sheffield and the talent of local people and organisations."

The composition of the Partnership is available here: <https://www.sheffieldcitypartnership.org/board-members>. Sheffield City Council is represented on the Partnership by the leaders of the three largest political groups and by the Chief Executive.

Questions of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q.1 In July I asked about the future of the Central Library and the cost of repairs to the building. You stated that another assessment of the building was commissioned which will ultimately support a decision around the future of the building. The final report was expected in August this year.

- (a) Is the report complete and has it been presented, and to whom?**
- (b) When will it be made available for public scrutiny?**

A.1 A report containing cost estimates was completed on September 19th, this cost estimate is provided as an early budget estimate of costs only. Its purpose is to assist in decision-making and provide direction for the future of the project. These will need to be further developed and defined as the design and costing of schemes develop. A report will be presented to Strategy and Resources Committee on the 21st of December, which will set out a proposed route to gain all the information needed to allow Members to decide properly on the building's future.

Q.2 The report should include options and costs for remediation of the external façade of the building which continues to deteriorate. Its condition is so worrying that the public must be protected from falling masonry and, despite notices to the contrary it looks closed.

(a) What urgent action has been recommended in the report to prevent further deterioration, especially as all construction costs are escalating due to inflation?

(b) When can we expect action to be taken?

A.2 The report and feedback have recommended several measures to maintain the structure's integrity, including regular inspections, removal of cracked or damaged stonework, removal of vegetation, infilling of existing cracks using flexible adhesive sealant, and consideration of cathodic protection for the steelwork to prevent further decay. The façade of the building undergoes daily, weekly, and quarterly inspections to assess its condition. Until comprehensive repairs are implemented, infilling existing cracks with flexible adhesive sealant to mitigate ongoing rainwater ingress into the façade is under development along with the consideration of a cathodic protection of the steelwork on the outer wall to prevent any decay of the structure.

To repair the building, a detailed and complex process needs to be followed, which involves a lot of work and careful planning. The process starts with conducting surveys, investigations, and design solutions to determine the best approach. These surveys and investigations consider various factors, such as the extent of the damage, the age of the building, and the materials used in the construction.

Once the surveys and investigations are complete, the next step is to prioritise the repairs based on the severity of the damage and its impact on the building's structural integrity. Depending on the situation, some repairs might be more urgent than others and may be able to be carried out at an earlier stage. In this case, the façade of the building will be given top priority and repaired as soon as possible.

Q.3 Sheffield is striving to boost its visitor economy and to increase footfall in the City Centre. How will the sight of an iconic building at the heart of our cultural offering add to the visitor experience, unless

they seek a dystopian one?

- A.3 The hoardings around the Central Library are a critical safety measure, given the current condition of the façade of the building. As well as working on a long-term solution for the Central Library (see the answer below), we are also working with Sheffield Museums to improve the look and feel of the hoarding (as done elsewhere in the city) in the short term.

The Graves Gallery within the Central Library is a key part of the cultural offering of the city. A paper will be presented at Strategy and Resources Policy Committee in December to identify the future role of the Central Library and Graves Gallery building where the potential of the Gallery as a visitor experience will be further explored.

- Q.4 I also asked if there were proposals to repurpose the building and find new locations for the Graves Gallery, the Central Library. You stated proposals outlining options for the Graves Gallery and Central Library will be brought to the relevant Policy Committees in the autumn. It is now winter. What options have been identified?**

- A.4 A report will be presented to the Communities, Parks and Leisure Committee and subsequently to the Strategy & Resources Committee in December seeking approval for the proposed next steps and governance for the work to identify the future role of the Central Library and Graves Gallery building. This will include workstreams to look at the repairs needed for the building as well as the vision and location for the Central Library, City Archives and Graves Gallery.

Questions of Councillor Steve Ayriss to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Notwithstanding the initial progress in partnership with Friends of Graves Park and Save Rose Garden Café towards accelerating the restoration of the Café, which I am sure you will welcome, please could you clarify your response to my Written Questions at Council on 4 October regarding the Council's commitments in relinquishing the Graves Park Norton Nurseries site back to parkland and enable the Friends of Graves Park to complete Phase 3 of the Chantreyland Arboretum project, which they developed back in 2000, aimed at achieving a treescape and ecologically enriched environment, sufficiently biodiverse to boost the ecosystem productivity, and opened up to the public once completed. In particular:-

- Q.1 In your response at October Council, you stated that "We need the Strategic Accommodation Review to be concluded in order to make definitive plans to re-locate our services. Until then, we continue to use**

this small section of the park to service Graves Park and the surrounding area.”

What do you define as “and surrounding area” with regard to the use of Norton Nurseries, given that the surrounding area might be interpreted as including more than 36 parks and open spaces in the city, and therefore in conflict with the ‘2009 Scheme’ for Graves Park, as agreed with the Charities Commission?

- A.1 There are 4 parks and countryside teams (currently 17 staff) plus the Animal Farm team which use Norton Nursery as an operational base. This includes the team that maintains Graves Park, Graves Park Animal Farm, smaller parks in the surrounding area, plus council housing public realm in the S8 area (from Batemoor to Greenhill (6 staff)).

Other teams using the Nursery cover wider areas in the South of Sheffield, from Frecheville to Dore and Topley as well as 2 staff that drive bigger vehicles (tractors and grab lorry). The team covering Dore, Topley and Millhouses just collect vehicles in the morning and return them in the evening, while the other teams including the Graves Park Animal Farm team keep additional grounds maintenance machinery and supplies on site and use the welfare facilities. It’s important that the Parks & Countryside service has access to the facilities nearest to the areas that they maintain. As Graves Park is one of the largest parks in Sheffield, it makes sense to have staff based in the park, at least until the strategic accommodation review is completed.

The council remains committed to finding an alternative base for staff.

- Q.2 It is unclear from the responses in October as to why the release of barely two acres of despoiled landscape at Norton Nurseries could not be returned to the park immediately in compliance with the ‘2009 Scheme’ and at minimal cost to this Council, but that it is contingent upon the review of operations at Staniforth Road and Manor Lane. Perhaps could you clarify this further?**

We are conducting a review of the operational services accommodation situated at Staniforth Rd and Manor Lane. The aim of this review is to merge the services into a single site. By consolidating the sites, we expect to reduce our accommodation and backlog maintenance costs, as well as improve the facilities.

Through this review, we will gather valuable insights and design strategies that can be applied to other operational site accommodations in the future. While our resources are currently limited, we remain committed to exploring all possible options and opportunities to consolidate our operations. This includes colocation options that will contribute to cost-effectiveness and improve the quality of our service delivery.

The area known as Norton Nurseries remains part of Graves Park and is being used to store machinery and provide welfare facilities to services Graves Park, Animal Farm and surrounding area, as defined in the answer A1. To relocate the machinery, equipment and staff welfare facilities out of the park requires a wider review of the council's operational bases. To move them without this review would add a level of inefficiency to our parks and public realm maintenance that SCC can't afford.

Q.3 Given the spirit of urgency shown in the newly-formed partnership approach in accelerating the restoration of the Rose Garden Café, would you not consider a similar approach be taken to assist in progressing Area 3 of the Chantreyland Arboretum project, launched back in 2000?

A.3 The council has given a commitment to move operational staff from this small part of Graves Park as soon as alternative facility is found. This work is underway through the council's accommodation review.

Questions of Councillor Kurtis Crossland to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q.1 Could you provide detailed information on how the City Council calculates the average waiting times for phone calls? I am particularly interested in understanding whether this calculation includes only the calls that are successfully connected or if it also accounts for calls that are disconnected while still in the queue.

A.1 The Contact Centre Average Wait Time is calculated based on the total number of calls made to the Contact Centre and the total wait time in seconds for each call, and so this includes abandoned calls as well as answered calls. We do have a 60 second abandoned threshold, meaning that we don't include calls in any reports that are abandoned in less than 60 seconds as we make the assumption that the caller has changed their mind about the call rather than abandoning because of an unnecessary wait.

Q.2 What is the average time on the Council Tax phone line? What is the longest time?

A.2 The average and longest wait time for the Council Tax line in the last two weeks were as follows:

w/c 20th Nov 23 -
Average wait time 23 mins 59 secs
Longest wait time 1 hour 36 mins 18 secs

w/c 13th Nov 23 -
Average wait time 21 mins 38 secs
Longest wait time 1 hour 36 mins 19 secs

Over recent months the Council Tax line has been the least well performing of all Contact Centre strands, primarily due to long-term staff sickness. It is clear that there is work to do to improve performance and actions are being taken to do this. New staff recently recruited have been allocated onto this line, have completed much of their training and are now starting to take calls. We therefore anticipate a marked improvement in performance over the coming weeks.

Question of Councillor Mike Levery to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q. Following the review of the committee system in 2022/23, the following was recommended from the six-month review in April 2023:

“The Governance Committee highlighted concerns around the process for issues that come under the remit of more than one Policy Committee. The process, as set out in the constitution, allows for the Strategy and Resources Committee to determine the most appropriate Policy Committee to take a cross-cutting decision, or to take the decision itself. Governance Committee felt that this process is not working as intended, with Strategy and Resources Policy Committee tending to take decisions rather than directing them to the most appropriate forum.”

Since this recommendation was made, how many cross-cutting issues have been passed to the most appropriate Policy Committee, and how many retained by Strategy and Resources Committee?

A. The Strategy and Resources Policy Committee has considered its work programme at each of its meetings in this municipal year. As part of this, consideration is given to identified cross-cutting issues and which committee should take responsibility for leading on them.

In total, fifteen cross-cutting issues have been considered by the committee. Of these, nine have been passed to another committee as follows:

- Recommissioning of Community-Based Domestic Abuse Support Contract (Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee)
- Commissioning a Community Infection Prevention and Control Service (Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee, with briefing for other relevant committees)
- Annual Review of Sheffield’s Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Finance Committee)
- Commissioning of a Debt Recovery Framework (Finance Committee)

- Corporate Debt Policy (Finance Committee)
- Endorsement of Sheffield Physical Health Improvement Strategy for people living with severe mental illness, people with learning disabilities and autistic people (Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee, with briefing for other relevant committees)
- Adult Early Intervention Strategy (Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee, with briefing for other relevant committees)
- Commission of Education System (Education, Children and Families Policy Committee)
- Community Champions (Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee)

Six items have been retained by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee for consideration. These are:

- Food Strategy and related commissioning model
- Household Support Fund
- White Ribbon Accreditation Plan
- Heritage Strategy for Sheffield
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Annual Report
- Violence Against Women and Girls, Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy (forthcoming in 2024).

Questions of Councillor Alexi Dimond to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q.1 What role, if any, does the Campaign Improvement Board, allegedly chaired by Cllr Peter Mason leader of Ealing Council, have in the governance and decision making of Sheffield City Council?

A.1 None.

Q.2 What role, if any, does the board have in decision making in each policy committee?

A.2 None.

Q.3 Last year the Council renewed its banking contract with Barclays without any democratic scrutiny or consideration of human rights or the Council's commitment to Net Zero and action on climate. Barclays Bank (UK) holds more than £1 billion in shares of, and provides more than £3bn in loans and underwriting to nine companies whose weapons, components and military technology have been used in Israel's armed violence against Palestinians. How is this consistent with Sheffield's pledge to become an anti-racist city?

A.3 The 2022 banking contract procurement was run as an open tender as required by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Social Value commitments were considered as part of the evaluation when awarding the contract. Contractors / suppliers are required to abide by the principles of the Council's Ethical Procurement Policy and Ethical Code of Conduct for Suppliers.

The Council has a risk averse approach to its stewardship of Council funds, especially given the challenges in predicting what could happen in financial markets, geopolitically or at an institutional level. Banking and investments are regularly monitored and should concerns arise around security, liquidity or Environmental, Social or Governance issues, we would look to act at the earliest opportunity.

In our Treasury Management Strategy we have an Ethical Investment Strategy, which states:

“the Council will not knowingly invest directly in businesses whose activities and practices are inconsistent with the Council’s values. To that end, the Council commits not to hold any direct investments in fossil fuels, tobacco, arms companies or, to the best of our knowledge, companies involved in tax evasion or grave misconduct.”

Q.4 HP Inc (US) provides services to the offices of Israeli PM Netanyahu and Financial Minister Smotrich. HP-branded corporations provide and operate technology that Israel uses to maintain its system of apartheid, occupation and settler colonialism over the Palestinian people. Hewlett Packard’s violations of Palestinian human rights have been well documented. Aside from providing services and technology to the Israeli army and police that maintain Israel’s illegal occupation and siege of Gaza, HP provides Israel’s Population and Immigration Authority with the exclusive Itanium servers for its Aviv System.

What contracts does the Council hold with HP, when are these contracts due to end and how are these contracts consistent with Sheffield’s pledge to become an anti-racist city?

A.4 The Council does not have any direct contract with HP Inc (US), although we do use HP laptops across the Council. This equipment is procured via the Government’s Crown Commercial Service framework, Technology Services 2 contract from which we selected our supplier, Specialist Computer Centre.

Specialist Computer Centre run a mini competition with direct manufactures of IT laptops, Dell, HP, Lenovo, Microsoft etc. and select the most economically advantageous product to meet our requirements.

The Council is committed to anti-racism in everything that it does. This includes ensuring that its commissioning and procurement approaches are

fair and fully accessible to BAME led organisations, and that our commissioning and procurement practices actively support inclusion, within the boundaries of what procurement law allows us to take into account. We have no evidence that HP Inc (US) is acting in an unethical or exploitative way or in a way that is inconsistent with our ethical procurement policy.

HP issued a press statement on this matter in 2021 [HP Statement on Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions \(BDS\) Campaign*](#). This is provided for information and is not a statement that is endorsed by the Council.

*<https://press.hp.com/us/en/blogs/2021/hp-statement-on-boycott-divestment-sanctions-campaign.html>.

Q.5 Does the Council still recognise the state of Palestine and believe that its capital should be East Jerusalem, and that all of Gaza and the West Bank should be part of this state?

A.5 In September 2019, Sheffield City Council agreed a motion which stated that “there must be recognition of the rights of Palestinians to their own state”. This position has not changed.

The motion made no reference to the capital nor the parts of a Palestinian state, but it is widely accepted that a sovereign Palestine would include the West Bank and Gaza.

The motion is available at:

<https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=154&MIId=7270>

Questions of Councillor Maroof Raouf to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q.1 Are there any local awareness campaigns or educational initiatives supported by this Council to inform the residents of this city about the challenges faced by Palestinians, and to advocate for their rights to live without fear of being attacked by Israel?

A.1 The Council is not conducting or supporting any awareness campaigns or initiatives on this issue at this time.

In relation to awareness campaigns, the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity will apply. This is statutory guidance that we must adhere to. This states that all local authority publicity should be lawful, cost-effective, objective, even-handed and appropriate. It must have regard to equality and diversity and be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity.

The code states that *“local authorities should not use public funds to mount publicity campaigns whose primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy”*, and that *“local authorities should ensure that publicity relating to policies and proposals from central government is balanced and factually accurate. Such publicity may set out the local authority’s views and reasons for holding those views, but should avoid anything likely to be perceived by readers as constituting a political statement, or being a commentary on contentious areas of public policy.”*

It also states that *“local authorities should consider how any publicity they issue can contribute to the promotion of any duties applicable to them in relation to the elimination of discrimination, the advancement of equality and the fostering of good relations.”*

Any such campaign or initiative would need to be mindful of and compliant with the relevant parts of this code.

Q.2 You addressed the appalling attacks that took place in Israel as terrorism, you called them out for what they were, however, not once have you called out the massacre taking place in Palestine as genocide, would you now like to do so?

A.2 The loss of civilian life in Gaza and the humanitarian catastrophe that we now see is heartbreaking. In any conflict, international law must always be upheld and any breaches must be investigated, fully, swiftly and carefully.

Genocide is a complex legal term with a specific definition which is about the intentional destruction of a people. The full definition is set out in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The experts at the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust explain on their website that a full criminal trial in an international court is necessary to determine what is and is not genocide. I am not an international lawyer and do not have the absolute certainty of others when they use this term and so it is not a term I would use.

The words we use in this chamber and in all parts of public life matter and I know that there are lots of people who would disagree with the use of this particular term. As such I think all members should be thoughtful about their use of language and think carefully before using words that risk causing hurt and division.

Q.3 How is this Council working to ensure that Palestinians within our community, particularly those affected by the ongoing genocide, have access to local support services to help them overcome the trauma that they are suffering?

A.3 The Council commissions or supports a range of services designed to help people suffering trauma or mental health problems. Services available are

set out on the Sheffield Mental Health Guide website which is run by Sheffield Flourish on behalf of SCC.

Services available include those specifically for people affected by trauma, such as Life After Crisis, and culturally-specific services, such as MCAPN (the Muslim Counsellor and Psychotherapy Network), as well as services for children and young people.

Q.4 Given the recent rise in Islamophobia, what steps are you taking to ensure that Muslims in this city feel safe from harm?

A.4 We want to ensure that everyone who lives in Sheffield is safe from harm and feels safe from harm. Recent discussions with community and faith sector leaders following the previous Full Council debate and resolution has indicated that both the Muslim and Jewish communities in the city feel less safe than they did before the Hamas attack on Israel and subsequent conflict in Gaza. This is clearly of significant concern.

We are working closely with South Yorkshire Police to maintain an up to date understanding of community tensions. It is through continued inter-faith dialogue, working with community leaders, and through political leadership that concerns will be reduced. By doing so, we will support all communities to feel safe from harm during this difficult period.

We also continue to promote and support the reporting of hate crime and hate incidents through the use of the third-party reporting arrangements that we have in place in the city.

Q.5 Given the war crimes Israel is committing in Palestine at this current time, would you now like to take the opportunity, and say that you were wrong in agreeing to raise the flag of Israel above the City of Sanctuary?

A.5 I explained in detail at the Full Council meeting that the Israeli flag was raised to show solidarity with the victims of an appalling terrorist attack. I do not think it was wrong to show solidarity. I appreciate that you and others may disagree and this is your right. As I have stated before, I would be happy to sit down and talk to you about this if you would like.

If war crimes have been committed then they should be fully investigated.

Q.6 Given the findings of the REC report, do you now acknowledge that raising the Israeli flag was not an appropriate action to take?

A.6 The decision to raise the Israeli flag was not an easy one. I set out in my answer to Full Council at its meeting on 1 November the reasons for flying the Israeli flag, which was done at the suggestion of Government. That decision was made following consideration of our statutory obligations

under the Equality Act (particularly the Public Sector Equality Duty at s149) and with an understanding of the findings and recommendations of the Race Equality Commission.

As I said last month: “On October 7th a brutal, appalling terrorist attack was committed by Hamas. An attack that shocked the world and I utterly condemn it. More Jewish people were killed on October 7th than on any day since the Holocaust.

The flag of Israel was flown to show solidarity with the victims of that attack.

Raising the flag was not about endorsing any actions taken by the Netanyahu government either before or after October 7th. A government that has a shameful record of human rights abuses and that has shown little interest in securing peace in the Middle East.

Nor was this about taking sides in a decades long conflict.

This was about showing solidarity with the victims of a terror attack, and it was a decision that was made before the heavy bombardment of Gaza and the ground assaults had begun.

The flag was flown on Tuesday 10th October. It was to be flown for one day and one day only, until 8pm when it was to be taken down.

We could – and should – have been clearer about this at the time.

I know that not everyone agreed with the decision that was made here in Sheffield. The decision was taken in good faith and of course, I and others have reflected on it a lot over the last few weeks as the horror of what we saw in Israel on October 7th has been followed by the horror of what is happening in Gaza.”

I extended my deep sympathy and solidarity to everyone who is grieving, hurting and suffering trauma in Israel and Palestine but also here in Sheffield, and I repeat that today.

Q.7 What progress has there been made by this Council in building interfaith dialogue over the last 5 years?

A.7 Sheffield is a diverse city with many faiths represented within our communities. Faith organisations and the work that they do enrich the lives of people right across Sheffield. Faith organisations also provide leadership and direction for many in the city and are an important part of the fabric of our leadership, particularly during times of crisis.

Established Interfaith structures, such as the Faith Leaders Group and the Religion and Belief Partnership exist in the city. It has been recognised for some time that these structures were insufficient in scope and influence to

support effective interfaith working and needed to reach more wider within the faith community. As such, the council has been working over the last year to support the development of a new Interfaith Compact/Covenant for the city.

The Interfaith Compact/Covenant has been developed to get the participation of a wider set of faith voices and develop new partnerships on matters of mutual interest. It would include regular Interfaith engagement meetings, consultations and a faith summit. The Faith Leaders Group agreed the Compact/Covenant on 5 October and it had been intended that this would be launched on 16 November during Interfaith week, but events in the Middle East meant that a new date is now being sought.

Following the last Full Council meeting the Chief Executive and other senior officers have met faith and community leaders to explore options for demonstrating solidarity with the victims of violence in the Middle East, reconciliation and rebuilding of trust. These discussions have been productive and have led to an initial independently-mediated meeting of some faith leaders. It is hoped that this will be followed by further mediated discussion in the coming months as a precursor to re-establishing even more effective interfaith structures for the city.

Q.8 On October 11th you said that “...Sheffield City Council displayed the Israeli flag to show solidarity with the innocent people in that country who faced appalling acts of terror”. Would you now like to encourage the Chief Exec to honour the Green Party’s request to fly the flag of Palestine so as to show solidarity with the innocent people in that country who have faced appalling acts of terror from the Israeli government?

A.8 Following the last Full Council meeting the Chief Executive and other senior officers have met faith and community leaders to explore options for demonstrating solidarity with the victims of violence in the Middle East, supporting reconciliation and rebuilding of trust. This also included seeking views on the request received from Green councillors to fly the Palestinian flag. The leaders of the three largest groups have agreed with the recommendation of the Chief Executive, based on the findings of those community meetings, a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and Community Tension Impact Assessment from South Yorkshire Police that the Palestinian flag should not be flown. The rationale for this decision is as follows:

- When considering visible acts of solidarity with Palestine, consistent feedback from community and faith groups opposed the flying of flags of nation states on grounds including that such flag flying is divisive. Only a very small minority thought that flying the Palestinian flag would help send a clear signal of support.
- South Yorkshire Police’s engagement highlights that city’s small and largely elderly Jewish community are feeling isolated, vulnerable and

under threat – raising the Palestinian flag in the current environment would be seen as offensive and threatening and could be reported as a racist incident, leading to further heightening of tensions.

- The EIA highlights risks around flying the Palestinian flag in relation to a number of protected characteristics – notably race, age and faith/belief. At the current time with the Jewish festival of Hanukkah starting on 7 December and the Christmas festivities in the city underway, there is concern that flying the Palestinian flag would be even more divisive in the city.
- Flying the Palestinian flag is not something we are aware that any other Council or public body has done in the UK, as such, flying the flag would likely attract national interest which could lead to further division.

Q.9 How do you ensure that public spaces, including the raising of flags, represent the diversity of our community?

A.9 As agreed at the last Full Council meeting, the council's flag protocol will be reviewed. This will include full consideration of how the flying of flags represents the diversity of our community, whilst ensuring that we adhere to our Public Sector Equality Duty requirement of having regard to ensuring good relations between different groups of people.

Q.10 Has there been any community input or consultation regarding the decision to raise specific flags, in public spaces?

A.10 The current flag protocol does not require community input or consultation. However, as outlined in the answer to Q8 above, there has been extensive community input to the decision not to fly the Palestinian flag at this time. The need for appropriate community input and consultation will be considered as part of the process of revising the flag protocol.

Q.11 What local initiatives or programs are you encouraging this council to participate in to provide humanitarian aid to Palestinians in need, particularly in areas affected by the indiscriminate bombing of the Israelis?

A.11 I am aware that there are a number of campaigns underway both nationally and in the city to support people affected by the ongoing conflict. I would encourage anybody who wished and was able to do so to support those campaigns. These include the Red Cross appeal for Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories; UNICEF's appeal to support children in Gaza; and Islamic Relief's Palestine Emergency Appeal. Local fundraising is also taking place.

Question of Councillor Ruth Milsom to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

- Q. As I know you are aware, the annual moorland burning season is well under way again, with smoke drift from burns affecting communities in Sheffield. This always quite rightly raises a lot of concern about people's health, but some of this year's burning activity has also caused new levels of anger as people see our Clean Air Plan and local efforts to clean up our city's air undermined by the continuation of this unnecessary and antisocial practice.**

What steps has the Leader taken to support local voices which are very strongly against moorland burning, and to add weight to the climate, ecological, and public health arguments for stopping it?

- A. I share the concern and anger that residents have about the moorland burning. I have written to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs to call on the government to take action to end this destructive practice and to put pressure on landowners to put an immediate end to it this season.**

Despite our limited powers, Sheffield City Council is doing all we can to stop moorland burning. Since 2016, Sheffield City Council has prohibited burning on the moorland that it owns. The Council owns Hathersage, Houndkirk and Burbage Moors, bits of the Eastern Moors, and Blackamoor. We are working with other land managers to promote sustainable land management practices and urge adjacent landowners to follow our lead and introduce a 'non-burning' policy in favour of more sustainable management practices. We are also currently exploring the option of issuing an abatement order against landowners.

The government has mandated many cities, Sheffield included, to take significant action to improve air quality. We are taking this action. We all know that air pollution kills and that air pollution from fires has an immediate impact on hospital admissions and A&E attendances. We have had reports from people with asthma and breathing difficulties whose condition is made worse by moorland burning. We all know that the real impact of air pollution is in heart attacks and strokes, and increasingly lung cancer is linked to air pollution. The burning of heather, simply speaking, makes it harder for Sheffield to achieve its air quality improvement ambitions, its climate and net zero ambitions.

Moorland burning also increases flood risk by reducing the amount of vegetation on our uplands. In October, we saw significant flooding in parts of South Yorkshire and Derbyshire, as well as across the UK, caused by Storm Babet. Measures to hold more water high up in our river catchment systems, and to slow the flow of water into our rivers, are essential for our communities and for biodiversity. The less vegetation there is on our moors, the quicker the runoff of water.

I would like to thank residents who have raised their voices in opposition to the destructive practice of moorland burning. The Government and landowners need to listen to local anger and take action to end moorland burning.

Question of Councillor Mick Rooney to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

Q. Can I please get an update as to what is happening with the roof replacement programme?

A. In December 2020, the Pitched roofing contract was awarded to Avonside to undertake reroofing works to approximately 6000 properties. The contract commenced on site in March 2021. On 6th of September 2022, the contractor entered administration and subsequently ceased to operate. Under the contract clauses, the contract was terminated, and works were stopped.

The total number of properties that benefited from the Avonside roofing contract was 1284. As a result, about 4716 properties, that had been included in the programme, had not had the roof replaced.

These properties have been resurveyed and are to be included in a new contract to deliver replacement roofing works. Additional properties, where roof replacement is now required, have been identified via stock condition surveying undertaken by the Asset Management team, and feedback from the Repairs and Maintenance Service. The total number of properties to be included in the project is about 5000.

Detailed work is continuing to prepare the tender documentation and the pre-tender Standard Selection Questionnaire (SSQ). Ecological requirements, particularly around Swifts, are being finalised, as is Health and Safety documentation and clarifications to the technical specification.

The SSQ is scheduled for issue in January 2024 and the full tender will follow completion of that process. Contract award and contractor start on site is scheduled for Quarter 1 of the 2024/25 financial year.

Questions of Councillor Sophie Thornton to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

Q.1 What was the average waiting time for a Council house repair issue to be resolved over the last three months, and what was the longest wait? Please divide this information by planned and responsive repairs.

A.1 The average waiting time for a council house responsive repair during the last three months was 24 days. The target time for the majority of responsive repairs is 25 days. The longest wait was 650 days for a fire door. This job was visited several times due to no access from the customer.

The average waiting time for a planned repair during the last three months was 129 days. The longest wait for a planned repair was 960 days. This job involved a full set of replacement windows and external doors where the

customer required a support worker present when work was carried out.

It should be noted that demand across the repairs service remains exceptionally high, with an average of 2,700 new responsive repairs each week. We continue to complete as many repairs each week as we can, however the increase in repair requests has put pressure on our services.

Q.2 If a tenant was to submit a routine responsive repair today, how long would they be likely to wait for resolution?

A.2 The average number of days between a routine responsive repair raised on 29/11/2023 and its planned completion date is 31 calendar days. Given this is the average, a large number of responsive repairs are carried much more quickly than this. Over 80% of responsive repairs are completed within timescale. Emergency repairs are generally carried out within 4 hours of report.

Q.3 How many disrepair claims have been submitted in the last three months?

A.3 261 claims made in the period Aug to Oct 2023.

Q.4 What is the current number of outstanding or incomplete Council house repairs?

A.4 The service undertakes over 130,000 responsive repairs every year, equating to 2,500 per week. There are currently 13,824 open responsive repairs, which is about the expected number, of which 2,806 are overdue. This has reduced from over 3,000 jobs at the start of the calendar year and is against a backdrop of peak demand during 2023/24.

There are currently 8,882 open planned repairs, of which 3,961 are overdue.

Q.5 How many void properties are currently awaiting repairs to be made fit to relet?

A.5 We currently have 294 properties with Void Repairs. This is the lowest work in progress number that the Repairs Service has had during the last 7 years. The service continues to drive up performance, reducing our average turnaround time, through new initiatives, closer joint working with our teams and housing colleagues.

Q.6 How much rent and council tax would the council have received, had these voids been occupied? Please provide this information for the last four quarters.

- A.6 The average weekly rent is £94.39 on our properties and average weekly Council Tax is £27.70.

The average rent loss per property is £1,133, the table below shows the rental income and council tax loss for the last 4 quarters where data is available

Period	Average voids awaiting repair	Rental Income loss	C/Tax loss	Total
Q1 – 2023/24	353	400k	117k	517k
Q4 – 2022/23	344	390k	114k	504k
Q3 – 2022/23	340	385k	113k	498k
Q2 – 2022/23	440	498k	146k	644k
Total		1,673k	490k	2,163k

- Q.7 How many residents are on the housing register for Council properties?**

A.7 23,115

- Q.8 What was the average waiting time on the Council house repairs phone line before answering each month in the last two months? What was the longest wait?**

A.8 The average waiting time in October was 18 minutes and the longest wait was 1 hour and 55 minutes. October is the start of the peak season and Storm Babet also exaggerated the normally high demand with over 1,500 calls in one day (Friday 20th October) with demand carrying over into the following Monday.

The average waiting time for the Repairs Contact Centre in November improved to 12 mins and 42 seconds with the longest wait being 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Questions of Councillor Dianne Hurst to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

- Q.1 Empty Council houses and the social and monetary cost of these form a significant part of my case load, how many empty Council homes are there at the end of November?**

A.1 As at w/c 27/11/2023 there are 947 empty properties across the city. If the properties unavailable for letting (e.g. properties with Asset Management or those at Park Hill awaiting Urban Splash to take ownership) are excluded, there are 761 empty properties.

Q.2 What is the average time from becoming vacant to reletting for SCC properties?

A.2 The year to date average Calendar days between property quit to sign up of next tenant is 98.1, In October 2023 the average calendar days between a property being quit and sign up was 104 days.

Q.3 What is the target time for reletting?

A.3 49 days

Q.4 How much money has been lost in rental income and spent on Council tax as a result of these voids?

A.4 See Q/A6 from Cllr Thornton.

Q.5 How many people are registered on the rehousing list and how long does it take on average for someone who is actively bidding to be rehoused from registration to rehousing?

A.5 There are 23115 households on our register. The breakdown by band is as follows:

Priority Bands

Band A: 23

Band B: 625

Band C: 316

General Needs

Bands D & E combined: 22,151

The average time in Bands A-C is approximately 7 months. This varies depending on factors such as the number of bedrooms required, location, adaptations, etc...

For a 4-bed property the average waiting time in Bands A-C is in excess of 2 years.

For those households on our register without a priority (Those in Bands D and E) it isn't possible to provide an average waiting time as many households in these bands are not actively bidding, but are instead accruing waiting time.

Q.6 Given the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis and uncomfortably high interest rates, how many duties of Homelessness does the SCC currently owe as an authority?

A.6 We currently have a total of 2,071 duties broken down as follows:

- 415 owed a Prevention Duty
- 1,210 owed a Relief Duty
- 446 owed a Main Homeless Duty

Q.7 How long does it take for that duty to be satisfied and rehousing secured into accommodation suitable for the applicant's needs?

A.7 Homeless applicants who are awarded a duty and given reasonable preference (priority) on our housing register are usually made an offer in 6-8 months.

This varies depending on factors such as the number of bedrooms required, location, adaptations, etc...

Q.8 What resources are currently being invested into the prevention of homelessness?

A.8 Our Housing Solutions Access Team deal with all initial enquiries and give one-off advice to prevent homelessness. We have a Homelessness Prevention Team, and they work with customers who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days (or earlier if we are aware of their situation). The team will explore all available opportunities to prevent the household from becoming homeless including working with landlords, family and friends and partners to either enable them to remain in their current home or find suitable alternative accommodation before they become homeless. Our Private Rented Solutions Team find tenancies in the private sector for people who are threatened with homelessness and helps with the costs of moving to a new home. The team offers our "Call before You Serve" service to Landlords so we can prevent evictions occurring. Our team includes Financial Inclusion Officers to make sure people are advised on budgeting and that they are getting financial help they are entitled to including benefits. We fund an officer in the DWP to work with our customers specifically.

We have a specialist team for rough sleeping and one of their main activities is to prevent rough sleeping, so we work with a network of agencies to manage this risk and put in place interventions for individuals at risk.

We manage a Homelessness Prevention Fund so we can give practical assistance to people that is tailored to their circumstances.

We have a strong partnership of over 64 local organisations who are committed to preventing homelessness and we manage the Homelessness Prevention Forum which brings this group together. A steering group oversees the implementation of our agreed action plan.

We have an in-house tenancy support team that is specifically for our own tenants who are at risk of homelessness to provide them with extra support. Wraparound support is agreed with our partners for example around mental health needs, treatment programmes or care.

As well as direct provision we commission various services to provide housing related support to individuals, we specifically commission a homeless prevention contract, currently delivered by Shelter. We ensure that homeless prevention has a key focus in the development of service specifications.

Q.9 How much has temporary accommodation and homelessness cost the Council so far this year?

A.9 The cost of SCC owned temporary accommodation is around £2.1m per year. This cost is covered through the housing benefit revenue received for temporary accommodation. With a higher rent set for TA units of around £260 per week, income covers the full budget of TA with some surplus in the HRA for increased repairs due to re use of units through the year. This accommodation is provided for through income received.

The main homelessness accommodation cost is in the provision of hotel emergency accommodation. The actual spend to month 7 is £3,053,320. The forecast spend for this year is £6.9m. The maximum housing benefit reimbursement is £98 per week from the Government for hotel use and therefore the projected cost for this financial year is £5.6m. This is made up of £4.9m in subsidy loss (reimbursements from the government) due to the £98 cap and a further £700k from the Housing Solutions budget.

Q.10 Given the commitment of this council towards achieving net zero and tackling the climate crisis, how many council homes across the city are rated C and above, both as a percentage of existing stock and numerically?

A.10 Across the whole housing stock, the breakdown of EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) ratings are as follows:

EPC Band	No. of Council Homes
A	228
B	802
C	30,472
D	6,718
E	117
F	44
G	7
Unavailable	88
Total	38,476

In summary, 31,502 homes (82%) are within EPC bands A-C, and 6,974 (18%) homes are within the D-G band. Notably, less than 1% of the D-Gs fall within the E-G rating. 88 homes currently do not have an EPC rating which is being addressed through the stock condition and surveying programme.

Q.11 How does this compare with the data for the previous four years, since the Council declared a climate crisis?

A.11 There has been a significant increase in the number of Council homes over the past 4 years receiving energy performance improvements. Whilst unfortunately we do not have a specific number to baseline against there have been a range of capital investment projects that have contributed toward improving energy efficiency/ performance of Council homes toward EPC C. This includes:

- GHG LAD 2 (Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery) funded project comprising over 100 properties.
- SHDF2 (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) project consisting of £4m to improve 350 solid wall homes with external wall insulation systems
- Roof replacement project, installing replacement and top-up loft insulation

Q.12 How does this compare with other housing sectors?

A.12 82% of our council homes are within EPC bands A-C.

By contrast, only 23.4% of private housing is within EPC band A-C.

[Energy efficiency of housing in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/statistics/energy/energy-efficiency-of-housing-in-england-and-wales)

Q.13 How does this compare with other core cities?

A.13 There is a 2023 ONS report which looks at the energy efficiency of housing across England and Wales. See [Energy efficiency of housing in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/statistics/energy/energy-efficiency-of-housing-in-england-and-wales)

Q.14 How many council homes have been retrofitted to improve their rating and energy efficiency during this financial year?

A.14 4,386 properties have been retrofitted in the last 4 years to take their ratings above EPC C.

Questions of Councillor Bryan Lodge to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

Q.1 Will you advise on the number of void properties broken down by month for the current municipal year?

A.1

<i>Title</i>	<i>Current Average</i>	<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>September</i>	<i>October</i>
Number of empty properties	951	942	968	981	956	944	935	932
No of empty properties (excluding voids unavaliable to let)	757	747	769	783	758	742	740	761

Q.2 Will you advise how much this has cost the Council in Council Tax payments YTD made on the vacant properties for the current municipal year?

A.2 See Q/A6 Cllr Thornton

Q.3 What is the average cost of returning void properties to a condition that allows them to be let again?

A.3 The average cost per void is approx. £2,600.

Questions of Councillor Sophie Thornton to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Sheffield FC and Sheffield Eagles Rugby League Club have announced plans for a 5000-seat stadium and sports complex, based at the Meadowhead Transport club. A smaller 1000-seat stadium was proposed by Sheffield FC a couple of years ago. These proposals have the potential to bring great benefits to the local area, but many local residents have concerns about increased parking and traffic congestion in the area.

Q.1 Were you aware of these latest proposals?

A.1 A preapplication has been submitted to the Planning Department which is currently being assessed. Officers are fully aware of this.

Q.2 Have you received any briefings from officers regarding these proposals or any correspondence with Sheffield FC or Sheffield Eagles regarding these proposals?

A.2 A preapplication has been submitted as mentioned above. I have not received any correspondence.

Q.3 Would you be willing to meet with local elected members to discuss these proposals and any concerns raised by local residents about the possible impact of these proposals?

A.3 I will ask my office to set up a meeting with local elected members.

I am also told that Highway officers are willing to meet with local elected members and that the advice from the Head of Planning is that Planning Officers should also be present at the meeting.

Q.4 Can you reassure local residents that any planning application received would be subject to a full public consultation and that any decisions will be made in public by the Council's Planning Committee?

A.4 The planning application will be subject to the normal consultation process. It is expected that any decision would be made by the Planning and Highways Committee. As you will be aware this committee is chaired by Councillor Glynis Chapman and Councillor Alan Woodcock.

Q.5 Has any assessment been made, or will be made, on the possible impact of these proposals on the Local Plan and the CRSTS A61 Transport Corridor scheme?

- A.5 An assessment has not currently been made of the impact of the Sheffield FC ground proposals on the CRSTS A61 project, although the project team are aware of the application. The CRSTS A61 project is still early in its development stage and as it develops further, the Council will work to maximise the benefit of the CRSTS A61 and Sheffield FC development should the two schemes progress in parallel.

It should be noted that a full Transport Assessment will need to be undertaken by the applicant as part of the normal planning application requirements and this will consider whether there are any required improvements to the local highway and transport network.

- Q.6 If any planning application regarding these proposals are approved, will the council put in place appropriate highway management or highway changes to minimise any disruption due to construction traffic, prior to construction starting?"**

- A.6 The impact of construction traffic will be considered as part of the consideration of the application as a whole. It is likely that any planning consent granted would require the submission of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan. Such a would likely go before the planning committee, chaired by Councillor Glynis Chapman and Councillor Alan Woodcock.

Questions of Councillor Simon Clement-Jones to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Traffic congestion around St James' retail park at Meadowhead is continuing to cause concern for people living in the area.

- Q.1 Over the past year, what action, if any, has the Council taken to address the problems caused by traffic queuing to get into the retail park?**

- A.1 These issues predate me taking on the role of chair of this committee. However, I understand that the council first got in touch with the landowner of the retail park with evidence of the congestion issues caused by the access issues with the car park in 2018. This included proposing some potential solutions. Since then, there has been ongoing communication with the landowner working towards implementing a solution to the issue. Just recently, changes have been made to the layout of the car park to give priority to vehicles entering the car park as opposed to those exiting. The Council will continue to monitor the situation since the implementation of

these changes. I understand that the congestion issues around the retail park have also been factored into the options development for the CRSTS A61 scheme.

Q.2 Has the Council been in touch with the management of the retail park regarding improving the flow of traffic entering or exiting the retail park?

A.2 Please see response above.

Question of Councillor Kurtis Crossland to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q. Will the recent flooding in Beighton, caused by Storm Babet, be included in the impact assessment?

A. I understand that this is an issue that Clive Betts MP has been working on for some time and has recently met with residents on the issue. As a hard working local MP, he has been making the case on their behalf and we will continue to provide support as a council.

As you may know, the Sheffield Flooding Incident (October 2023) – Recovery Impact Assessment shows that the Veolia Recycling Centre, Crown Works, Rotherham Road and two residential properties flooded on Woodhouse Lane. There were also a number of roads across the area and a farm which were impacted. Most were due to the River Rother.

As the River Rother is a main river the Environment Agency are the responsible body and are in the process of carrying out an investigation into the flooding that has occurred through the catchment and as to whether anything can reasonably be proposed to reduce risk going forward.

The Flood and Water Team are also collating a full report under our Section 19 duties which will report in due course (we're obliged to publish within 6 months). I will ask that officers distribute this report to local members and Clive Betts MP when it becomes available.

Questions of Councillor Martin Smith to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

I have been told that problems with a new IT system are delaying a safety related Traffic Regulation Order in Totley.

Q.1 What was the original target date for the IT project and when is it forecast to be ready?

A.1 These matters are terribly technical, but I am briefed that task is more than the introduction of a new IT system; it is a fundamental change to the way that Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) are made and managed in Sheffield. This change – which affects all areas of the City and not just Totley - is driven by the Government's desire to see all traffic orders managed in an electronic format that is consistent across the country. The Government is hoping to have legislation in place from 2025 requiring all new TRO's to be published on the Department for Transport's 'Central Digital Platform' and at some point after this all old TRO's will need be added.

For Sheffield this involves a move away from using complicated text descriptions of stopping, waiting, loading and parking restrictions and replacing these with a digital system which shows these restrictions on a map. To make this change as well as moving to a new TRO management system, a new map-based TRO needs to be advertised that captures all current stopping, waiting, loading and parking restrictions in Sheffield. This is a very time consuming and complex task which involves converting all existing text-based restrictions into the new digital system, the identification of issues or anomalies and the drafting of a new TRO that ensures all the current kerbside restrictions on the ground (including areas where there are no restrictions) are matched in the order.

The original target date was to advertise the new TRO required by this change was July 2023 and subject to objections it was anticipated that the new system would be ready to use in September 2023 at the earliest.

Due to issues with the drafting and Legal review of new TRO the advertising date is currently expected to be January 2024 and subject to objections it is anticipated that the new system should be ready to use in March 2024.

Q.2 Why can't the old process be used while this issue is resolved?

A.2 There isn't an old process to use as such as the process for making an order remains the same; all TRO are made in accordance with The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The issue is a technical one relating to the progression of individual new TRO's whilst developing/advertising a new TRO to facilitate the switch to a map-based system. There are risks around amending a TRO that are revoked by the new TRO, having potentially conflicting restrictions covered

by more than one TRO and advertising two TROs for the same restriction which means that there is unfortunately a need to wait for the map-based order to be completed before we progress with advertising further 'loading and waiting' restrictions. Not pausing could create problems for enforcement and challenge of our TRO. This is an issue common across local authorities and I am confident that officers are navigating the most efficient way through this.

Questions of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 At the September meeting of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate committee when the decision to reopen Archer Lane (closed as part of the experimental Nether Edge Low Traffic Neighbourhood) was taken, the Head of Transport stated monitoring of the situation would continue. Minuted item 12.1.5 It was emphasised that the effects of reversing the road closure would need to be monitored closely.

- (a) What monitoring has taken place?**
- (b) At which locations?**
- (c) To what purpose?**
- (d) Is any discussion with Ecclesall councillors to take place?**

A.1 Appendix B in the September committee report included details of the count sites that were undertaken as part of the trial scheme monitoring programme. The intention is to repeat these counts again (at the same sites) in May 2024. The purpose is to see whether there has been a longer-term change in vehicle movements following the end of the trial closure of Archer Lane. Once the data has been captured and analysed we would be happy to brief local Councillors on this and we will seek to publish this information on our website. I will ask that council officers make you aware of this information once it has been published.

Q.2 Funding was available for installing pedestrian crossings as part of the NE LTN as evidenced by the decision to retain, on a permanent basis, new crossings on Psalter Lane and Osborne Road.

A.2 The September report included the following text within the 'financial implications' section; *'there is currently no allocation to make permanent the interventions within the LANTCP. The 23/24 and 24/25 LANTP will need to be reassessed in order to take forward any recommendations of the Committee'* This issue is the subject of a report which will come to the TRC committee next week.

I would be happy to share the report and discuss the issue with you

(a) Was any consideration given to the known problems and dangers experienced by people of all ages trying to cross Bannerdale Road in the vicinity of the Archer Lane junction?

A. Whilst this early stage of the Active Travel Neighbourhoods (ATN) programme was completed prior to me taking on the role of chair of this committee I am given to understand a number of sites were noted by respondents. The temporary crossings included within the ATNs were implemented following the initial consultation with local communities, including workshop groups, combined with roads where it was thought that traffic levels may increase as a result of the ATN. As this issue pre-dates me coming into this role, I will seek to find out further details and clarification for you, including speaking to previous Chairs and Cabinet members.

(b) If not, why not as the exclusion of Ecclesall councillors from the original consultations meant they could not make a case for one?

A. As you maybe aware the consultation area was extended after the initial consultation to include a wider area, including areas within your ward, and additional comments were received during this time.

I am given to understand the temporary crossings implemented on the peripheral roads of the ATN were not identified just through consultations with local Councillors, but also with input from the local community and expected traffic increases to be the main drivers for implementing the original temporary crossings.

(c) Bannerdale Road forms the boundary between Ecclesall ward and Nether Edge and Sharrow ward. Did the councillors for the neighbouring ward at the time raise this as an issue and press for one to be included?

A. I am not aware of conversations that took place at the time, but I will endeavour to find out and get back to you.

Q.3 Ecclesall councillors as well as residents have been looking forward to work commencing on installing safe pedestrian crossings on Abbey Lane which councillors were told should have started months ago.

(a) Why do delays continue?

A. I am informed that feedback from the public consultation has led to a need to revisit the original preliminary design of the project. The public feedback on the project was that the scope of the project should be widened to better reflect the needs of people cycling along (as well as across) Abbey Lane, include alterations to Abbey Lane and Whirlowdale Road junctions and include a signal-controlled crossing near Ecclesall Woods. This consultation feedback has led to additional investigation work being required to be undertaken across the full scheme. Whilst this has caused a delay to the

progression of the project, revisiting, then finalising the fundamental elements of the preliminary design to take account of public feedback is the main priority at this stage.

The new design plan will be shared with members and the public once the revised preliminary design is complete, currently anticipated Spring 2024. I will request that you are briefed on this as soon as possible.

(b) How is this affecting the fund allocated towards this work given the inflationary pressures on any construction work?

A. Funding has been secured for this project through the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) and Sheffield City Council. The Council are monitoring the need to revisit the project timescales included within the grant award conditions and if necessary, will work with SYMCA to go through any change control processes required. I will request that you are briefed on this more fully.

Q.4 Ecclesall councillors fully support measures to improve conditions for bus users. A measure we wish to see is the installation of green roofs on bus shelters but responsibility for these lies with the Mayoral Combined Authority.

(a) Does Cllr Miskell agree this would be a positive step forward for improving the street scene and our environment?

(b) If so, will he press the MCA to incorporate these into any plans involving our bus network?

A.4 I am in favour of more green roofs in our city, as they are positive for biodiversity. SYMCA is trialling green roofs with some new stops at Doncaster's iPort, but will need to assess those trials to understand the potential trade-offs. For example, higher cost implications with the same budget could mean a slower programme of renewals, and SYMCA already has excess demand for new/better/replaced stops.

Question of Councillor Toby Mallinson to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q. Since the recent heavy rainfall event in October, shoals of stones have built up in the Loxley River near Malin Bridge. Are these stones likely to affect the effectiveness of the recent flood works in the area and increase the risk of flooding?

A. Thank you for your question. In collaboration with the Environment Agency we have been monitoring the river in this location and are aware of this stone build up (usually referred to as shoaling). These shoals attract vegetation

build up which is a known flood risk, and this is being addressed by the Environment Agency. The shoals do not have a detrimental effect on the newly constructed flood defences downstream of Malin Bridge as any affects would be limited to the areas upstream, principally above Stannington Road. Recent high flow events in February 2022 and October 2023 have not threatened to overtop the riverbanks in this area so this backs up our understanding that the risk here would only be in a much larger flood event. As part of the review of our scheme as constructed we will be reviewing the “as built” model to confirm this level of risk and will continue to monitor the situation but we do not view these shoals as a significant risk at this time.

Questions of Councillor Marieanne Elliot to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 Why were pavement markings to designate school streets burnt off soon after being installed?

A.1 I am a big supporter of School Streets and have seen this issue myself during a recent visit to Porter Croft C Of E Primary School. I am informed that the pavement markings became slippery when wet, which was causing issues. Whilst School Streets fall under the remit of my policy committee, ongoing management is one dealt with by Waste and Street Scene. I will be writing to Cllr Joe Otten to discuss this issue.

Q.2 If it is said they were “slippery”, what enquiries did the Council make before purchasing them to ensure they were safe for use on pavements?

A.2 As I understand it, Amey were instructed by The Council to procure and install pavement stickers for the School Street Schemes. The product chosen came with a slip resistant certificate which was issued when the product was originally tested in 2013. The product supplier confirmed that the product is slip resistant and that glass beads are included in the manufacturing process. They stated that persons purchasing the product are recommended to add drop on glass beads after laying but they also stated this wasn't a requirement. As such the glass beads were not purchased or applied, this alongside the irregular application of the stickers initially meant they became a slip hazard and as such the decision to remove them was made. I would like to see these stickers replaced and will therefore be working with Cllr Joe Otten to ensure that this occurs.

Questions of Councillor Alexi Dimond to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

- Q.1 KSI rates for children under 15 are 40% higher in Sheffield compared with the next core city. Which wards have the highest KSI rates for children?**
- Q.2 Which are the top 10 most dangerous streets for children in Sheffield?**
- Q.3 Are these streets all open to motor vehicles?**
- Q.4 Are streets which are open to motor vehicles more dangerous than those which aren't?**

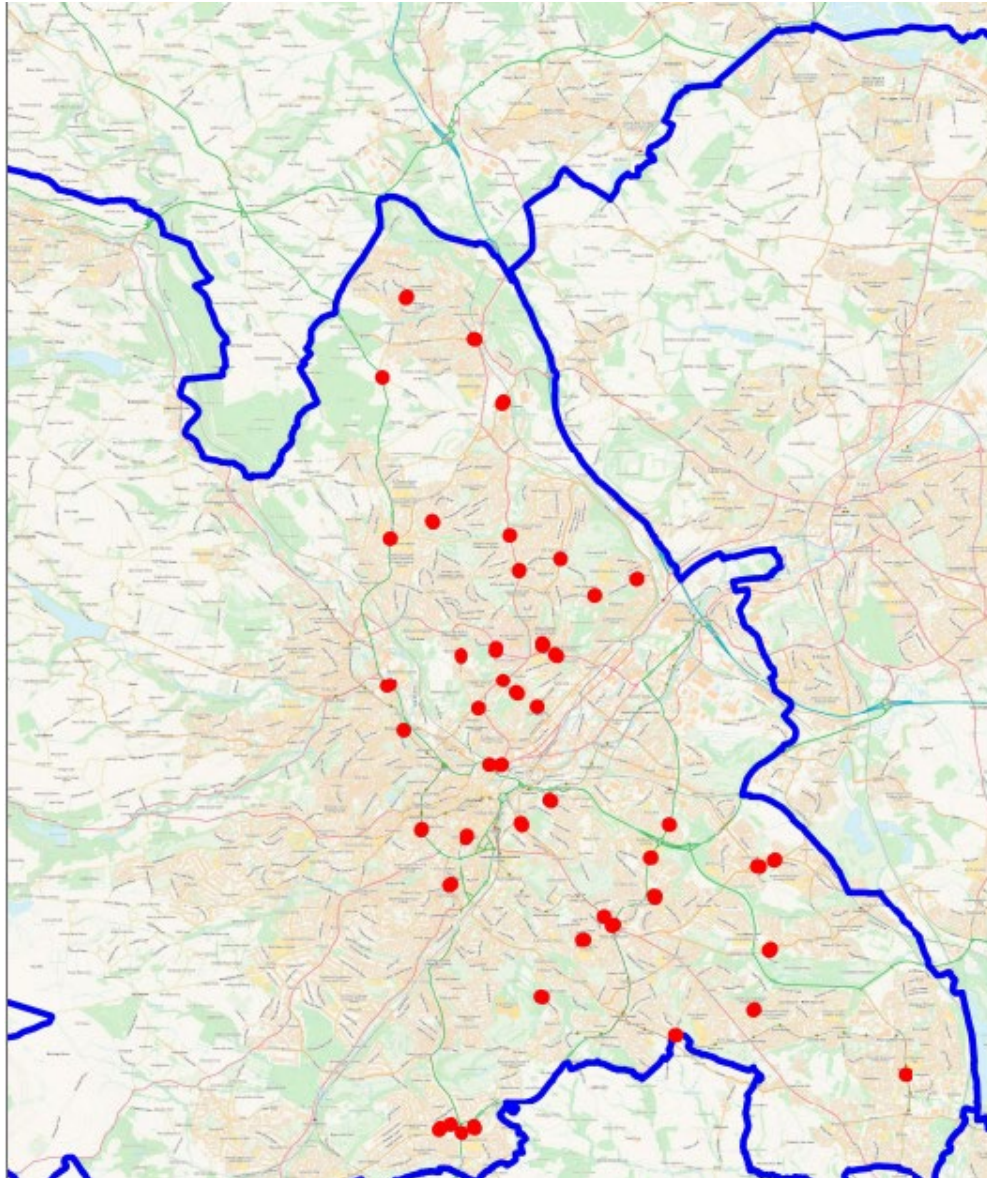
A. For clarity, I have taken all your questions together and answered them below.

I am advised that we don't have a list of child casualties by road in Sheffield, nor is it possible to extract data in this way. However, we have attempted to provide data on child casualties in the last 5 years in, what I hope, will be a helpful format.

We can tell you the following:

- A child casualty (as defined by the Department for Transport) is someone aged between 0 and 15 years of age, who is injured in a RTC.
- In the latest complete 5 years (2018 to 2022 inclusive) there have been 525 collisions in Sheffield that resulted in a child casualty.
- The 525 collisions produced 842 casualties, of which 602 were children, 235 were casualties aged over 15, and the age of 5 casualties was unknown.
- Of the 602 child casualties, 45% were motor vehicle passengers, 44% were pedestrians, 10% were pedal cyclists and 1% were power 2-wheeler riders/pillion passengers.
- Of the 602 child casualties, 2 were killed (1 pedestrian and 1 car passenger), 185 were seriously injured and 415 sustained slight injuries.

As some roads are very much longer than others, it would be more meaningful to look for clusters of collisions involving child casualties. We have looked for locations where there have been at least 2 collisions involving a child casualty within a 50-metre radius, merging any overlapping clusters. I have attached a map of the cluster sites marked by red dots. The map outlines that collision happen across the city, predominately to the North, Northeast, East, and Southeast, and Central parts of Sheffield. Further work is being done to look at correlations in deprived areas.



Earlier this year, South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership (SYSRP) committed to Vision Zero - an international aspiration to end all deaths and serious injuries on our roads. To achieve our vision in Sheffield, we will continue to work with our partners and develop and invest in our education, engineering, and enforcement programmes to ensure we are making our system as safe as possible.

To meet our aims, we are currently delivering a wide range of interventions, this includes:

- Targeted bespoke road safety education programs
- School Streets
- Modeshift Stars
- Bikeability Training
- Local Safety engineering Schemes
- Early Action Engineering Measure

- Signing and lining programmes
- 20 mph schemes in residential areas across the city
- 20 mph advisory outside HP schools in Sheffield
- Working with the LACs to implement speed indications through Vehicle Activated Signs
- Working with LACs to identify priority locations to deliver safer road crossings
- School Crossing Patrols at high priority sites

We are working up a Road Safety Action Plan, and this will highlight what we will continue to do, and what we intend to do to meet our aims of Vision Zero. This is expected in April 2024, expecting to present to TRC in February.

Questions of Councillor Maroof Raouf to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 Given your committees' decision to put the need to get to Sainsbury's over the safety and wellbeing of young children on their way to and from school, what additional measures are you putting in place at Archer Lane to ensure that the Council is being proactive in ensuring that children do not die on their way to get an education?

A.1 When the committee took the decision to end the trial closure of Archer Lane, it was also decided to make the temporary crossings permanent. This has been overwhelmingly welcomed by residents. However, the September committee report included the following text within the 'financial implications' section; *'there is currently no allocation to make permanent the interventions within the LANTCP. The 23/24 and 24/25 LANTP will need to be reassessed in order to take forward any recommendations of the Committee'*. This issue is the subject of a report on to the December TRC Committee, shortly after this meeting.

Our local safety programme will continue to be prioritised using collision data. As a council, we have an established process for dealing with highway improvement requests. Having this process ensures that highways improvements are dealt with equitably across the city, which is essential given the 13 years of funding cuts to the Council as a whole. Importantly, it also ensures that requests are heard equitably from areas of the city that may have high levels of need. Road safety is of concern everywhere. but it is notable that some of our most pressing road safety concerns are in our most deprived communities.

As mentioned above, the information available to date does not suggest the Nether Edge Active Neighbourhood project had a significant impact on personal injury collisions. During its implementation, the overall number of collisions did not change. In relation to Archer Lane, there were no collisions between June and December 2022. This compares with 4 collisions in an

equivalent six-month period in 2020 on Crookes Valley Road (between Harcourt Road and Oxford Street) which has led to this location being a high-priority site and a Local safety scheme is currently being designed which will be implemented in 2024.

I have asked that your concerns are noted for future considerations. I understand this is not the outcome you were hoping for, but hope you understand the reasons for this.

Q.2 Holt House School has seen a tremendous increase in traffic since the removal of the Archer Lane filter, what measures will be put in place to make sure that children can cross the road safely at the start of Bannerdale Road?

A.2 Monitoring of the Bannerdale Road/Archer Road/Abbeydale Road junction was undertaken as part of the Nether Edge active travel neighbourhood (ATN) trial. Over 5,000 vehicles used the Bannerdale 'arm' of the junction (two way, 12 hours, weekday) in 2022 - in advance of the ATN trial being implemented, which reduced the number of people using the junction by around 3% in 2023, once the ATN was implemented. However, there was a very small *increase* in traffic on the Bannerdale 'arm' in 2023. We will be repeating these counts in May 2024 to see if there has been a longer-term change to traffic movements in the area. I have asked officers to note your concerns, but as stated above, our local safety programme will continue to prioritise collision hotspots.

Questions of Councillor Terry Fox to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 Does the Administration have any plans to close Surrey Street to traffic?

A.1 The plan to make changes on Surrey Street was included in to the original 'Connecting Sheffield' City Centre scheme plans which were consulted on in 2021. Informal engagement has continued with a number of the businesses on Surrey Street since then and I have met with various businesses over the past few months to discuss this and various issues related to the city centre.

The plans from 2021 highlighted the transformation of both Surrey Street and Pinstone Street which complements the high-quality pedestrian and cycle zone currently being delivered on Fargate. This is critical in the delivery of the Council's vision to develop a successful and thriving city centre which will deliver new shops, services, homes, hotel and offices in the Heart of the City increasing the overall footfall within the city centre which will also support existing businesses. I am sure that you will agree that Sheffield city centre is on the up!

With regards to our city centre 'Connecting Sheffield' plans, we have appointed a contractor and they have been developing the design proposals and we are currently looking at updating the public and key stakeholders on the latest city centre plans with further engagement planned for early 2024. I am mindful that further discussions with citizens of the city, as well as key business stakeholders in the area will be required and I look forward to these happening in the new year.

Q.2 Has any impact assessment been conducted on the loss of revenue arising from this action?

A.2 All revenue implications will be assessed and included in the submission of the Full Business Case plus costs report which is currently programmed to be submitted in Spring 2024. This will look at the potential implications of any changes to parking and future maintenance requirements associated with the final scheme.

Questions of Councillor Ruth Milsom to the Chair of the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q.1 Following the government's instruction to councils in October 2023 that Food Waste Collection schemes should be adopted, what New Burdens Funding is available to Sheffield City Council for such a scheme to be rolled out citywide?

A.1 DEFRA have stated that New Burdens funding will be made available reasonable capital costs associated with the procurement of new vehicles and containers, and reasonable ongoing costs associated with the ongoing delivery of new food waste collection services, subject to future spending reviews.

New Burdens Funding will not be provided for any costs incurred due to the impact the introduction of separate food waste collections has on existing residual energy from waste collection contracts.

In November, the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee resolved that an application be made to DEFRA for a Transitional Arrangement to defer the introduction of weekly food waste collections until 2038. With a Transitional Arrangement in place, the Council would not be eligible to receive New Burdens funding until such a time that a food waste collection service has been introduced.

Government have confirmed they will be in contact with local authorities in receipt of a Transitional Arrangement on an annual basis to determine whether the implementation date of separate food waste collections can be brought forwards. The Council would then be eligible to receive New Burdens funding subject to Ministerial approval, and funding available at that time. This approach allows the Council to take a decision as to whether to introduce a food waste service before 2038, which is informed by the amount of New Burdens funding available from Government and any budgetary pressures associated with the provision of the service.

For those authorities rolling out food waste collections by 31 March 2026, DEFRA have stated that up to £295m will be allocated across those local authorities to cover one-off capital funding for vehicles and containers, to be distributed via a funding formula with payments expected in 2023/24. No details in relation to ongoing funding have been released.

Q.2 What would be the anticipated up-front and year-on-year costs of implementing and maintaining citywide Food Waste Collection, and to what extent would funding currently available from the government meet that cost?

A.2 Based on the estimate of the implementation and ongoing costs provided by Veolia and an estimate of New Burdens funding likely to be made

available to Sheffield, £3m was included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Analysis for ongoing service costs from 2025/26.

Q.3 What would be the anticipated reduction in tonnage of waste available to Sheffield's Energy Recovery Facility if citywide Food Waste Collection were to be implemented?

A.3 Estimates suggest that the introduction of a weekly food waste service would divert around 12,000 tonnes of food waste per year from the black bin. Any spare capacity at the energy recovery facility would be filled by Veolia through third party arrangements which would bring in additional commercial waste or municipal waste from other local authority areas, in accordance with approved planning permissions.

Q.4 Given that there is a minimal return in carbon reduction terms if food waste has to be transported to, say, Lincolnshire for processing, what priority is being given to developing a processing facility here in Sheffield, and what bearing does that have on determining the most prudent time to introduce a citywide food waste collection?

A.4 The marginal carbon benefit associated with the introduction of a weekly food waste service is due to the increased number of vehicles and mileage associated with collecting food waste across Sheffield, and the high efficiency of the energy recovery facility.

The Government's preferred treatment route for food waste is through anaerobic digestion. Whilst the Council has no plans to develop a new anaerobic digestion facility in Sheffield, it is expected that the clarity provided by Government in setting a timescale for the introduction of food waste services will stimulate private investment to ensure sufficient anaerobic digestion capacity is in place to meet national demand.

Whilst Sheffield has applied to DEFRA for a Transitional Arrangement to defer the introduction of food waste collections until 2038, Government has confirmed its intention to contact local authorities with a Transitional Arrangement on an annual basis to understand whether the introduction of a food waste service can be brought forwards. A Transitional Arrangement until 2038 will provide maximum flexibility for the Council as it will be able to take an informed decision when to introduce the service, and this decision will be informed by the amount of New Burdens funding available to the Council each year, any budgetary pressures associated with the ongoing provision of the service, the availability and location of anaerobic digestion capacity and advancements in collection vehicle technology (electric vehicles) which can help to reduce the carbon impact of the increased traffic movements.

Question of Councillor Minesh Parekh to the Chair of the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q. What consideration has the Council given to its bin allocation policy stating that households are only permitted one of each recycling bin at each household regardless of the number of residents, and the impact this has on HMOs and large student households; and will the Committee consider reviewing the bin allocation policy to enable larger (i.e. >6 residents) households to purchase additional waste and recycling bin capacity?

A. In Sheffield, the standard bin provision for houses is a 240 litre black bin for non-recyclable waste collected every two weeks, a 240 litre brown bin for plastic bottles, glass and cans, and a 140 litre blue bin for paper and card collected every four weeks.

Large households of 6 or more residents can apply for additional black bin capacity, with the size/number of larger/additional bins provided determined by the number of people living in the property. Where HMOs and large student households fill their recycling bins and request additional recycling capacity, consideration is provided on a case-by-case basis to assess whether additional recycling capacity is required.

The requirements of the Environment Act will mean that the current waste and recycling services provided will be changing, with new recycling collections of plastic pots, tubs and trays and cartons required by 31 March 2026. New service delivery options to meet the new requirements will be put forward to the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee in 2024 for consideration and these will include options to provide additional collection capacity for paper and card, as well as making available additional recycling capacity for large households.

Questions of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q.1 Has the Council received responses to its letters to any of the three landowners that were responsible for moorland burning in October?

A.1 Two of the three landowners have replied:

Broomhead Estate -He said that he took the points on board. That they have well trained keepers who are made aware of responsibilities. They take great care on where to burn and when depending on the weather forecast. There are occasions when they get it wrong. Wanted to impress that they are considerate of people living in the vicinity and take their responsibilities seriously. They have three tools for managing heather - cutting, grazing and burning. And there is polar debate on all.

Dunlin Estate – Stated that they take great care when choosing when and where to heather burn. The work is carried out by highly skilled practitioners with many years of experience. Regret the smoke and expect was caused by the high pressure which drove the smoke down. That said, they claim that as it was a south westerly wind it would have blown their smoke to the north of Stocksbridge. Went on to state that “heather burning on shallow peat is a vital tool to control the growth of excess vegetation which adds to the combustible biomass on the moors. The inability to control vegetation growth is leading to a huge increase in wildfire risk on the edges of urban areas and if we are prevented from burning on shallow peat the danger could be catastrophic. Examples to the west of the Peak District such as Stalybridge and Marsden bear this out”.

Moscar Moor – No response.

Q.2 What further response has been received from Natural England arising from their own investigations into these same incidents?

A.2 No further response as yet – Officers are chasing.

Q.3 Is the Council now considering the issue of an abatement notice under the powers available to it under section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990?

A.3 Not for the October bonfires as we are unable to identify which estate was responsible.

Each estate is likely to be compliant with Natural England requirements, but we will reconsider depending on any further response from Natural England. This will be shared with WSS members via Knowledge briefings.

Q.4 Do you welcome the decision of the Council to reject an unaffordable cost of paying Veolia to collect food waste for minimal carbon reduction and instead free up resources to pay for a range of other carbon reduction work?

A.4 A Transitional Arrangement to defer the introduction of a separate food waste collection service was approved at the November Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee. The recommendation to apply for a Transitional Arrangement was made due to the unknown budgetary pressure posed to the Council for the introduction of a food waste service, estimated at £3m per year, together with the marginal carbon savings that would be delivered from this new service.

The Transitional Arrangement will provide flexibility for the Council in providing opportunities to use the £3m per annum earmarked for food waste from 2025/26 included within the Medium Term Financial Analysis to instead support other Council wide revenue pressures or initiatives,

including the delivery of alternative climate change projects that could deliver additional carbon savings than could be achieved from a separate food waste collection service.

The £3m included in the Medium Term Financial Analysis is an unfunded corporate pressure, and options to utilise this money, if it becomes available at all, for other projects will need to be brought to the relevant Committee for consideration and approval.

It is also worth noting that Government have confirmed they will be in contact with local authorities in receipt of a Transitional Arrangement on an annual basis to determine whether the implementation date of separate food waste collections can be brought forwards. The Council will have the flexibility to take a decision as to whether to introduce a food waste service before 2038, which is informed by the amount of New Burdens funding available from Government, any budgetary pressures associated with the provision of the service and advancements in vehicle technology which may increase the carbon benefits associated with separate food waste collections.

Q.5 What impact did the 2001 decision to outsource the council's waste collection service have on the council's current approach to food waste collection?

A.5 Sheffield's current energy recovery facility opened in 2006, and alongside the recycling services provided, has helped Sheffield achieve a landfill rate of just 0.01% (asbestos only) with all other waste sent for energy recovery or recycling.

The disposal of food waste within the black bin has meant that Sheffield has had the environmental benefit of treating food waste via energy recovery since 2006, which has resulted in significant carbon savings when compared to alternative landfill.

Independent modelling carried out to calculate the carbon savings to be achieved from the introduction of separate, weekly food waste collections when compared to disposal through our energy recovery facility calculated a marginal 78 tonne equivalent CO₂ saving per year when compared to an 8,000 tonne per annum benefit had food waste been sent to landfill.

The long-term residual waste contract with Veolia, allowed the Council the option to apply for a Transitional Arrangement to defer the introduction of separate food waste collections until the end of the contract in 2038. Subject to Ministerial approval, the Transitional Arrangement will remove the estimated £3m unbudgeted pressure per year from 2025/26 for what would deliver a marginal carbon benefit, and potentially allow this money to be considered against other Council pressures or projects.

Questions of Councillor Ruth Mersereau to the Chair of the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

There was an incident at Longley Park on November 18th, where Service 97 and 98 buses were affected by badly parked cars on both sides of the road. The buses were unable to pass safely and had to be diverted.

Q.1 What actions will be taken to stop this happening in future

A.1 The council's Strategic Transport, Sustainability and Infrastructure team work closely with bus operators and MCA staff to resolve operational issues, including monthly reviews of issues such as this when they arise. Issues are logged and reviewed; additional measures are developed where appropriate. There must be existing parking restrictions in place for the council to use its powers to remove a vehicle. Unfortunately, there are no restrictions where this particular blockage took place.

Q.2 Do you think the Council should use its emergency powers to quickly clear bus routes by removing abandoned vehicles?

A.2 The Parking Enforcement policy allows for vehicles which are causing major obstructions to the safe movement of traffic to be removed, however they must be contravening an existing parking restriction. Attendance by the council's removals contractor normally takes place within the hour, once a PCN has been issued.

Q.3 How often have these powers been used in the past 12 months?

A.3 Parking Services have removed 161 vehicles in the last 12 months. It's not possible to provide a breakdown of the reason for each removal, so this will include vehicle removed for being persistent evaders, highway improvement works and for safety / traffic obstruction reasons.

Questions of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Chair of the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q.1 The Licensing Committee can take action against taxi drivers registered in Sheffield, so most adhere to the rules under the ultimate sanction of losing their licence to trade. Yet a significant number who have been registered elsewhere and where standards are not so rigorous operate here.

What remedies are available to people who have complaints against taxi drivers licenced elsewhere?

A.1 Sheffield Licensing Service has no jurisdiction of drivers and vehicles licensed elsewhere.

It is lawful for drivers to work in other districts to which they are licensed, typically known as out-of-area working. This is predominately undertaken by drivers of private hire vehicles who undertake job bookings from a private hire operator, such as Uber and Veezu, etc.

Where people wish to complain about a journey undertaken by a driver and vehicle licensed by another authority, they can so by complaining to the private hire operator directly or to the authority in which that driver are licensed – the private hire operator should provide complainants with this information.

Q.2 I have raised the matter of adding sources of energy to our district heating system a number of times. This issue cuts across a number of committees but now seems to land here.

(a) Can you update me on work being done to explore the potential of recovering heat from Sheffield’s extensive flooded mine network to feed into our district heating system?

A.2 Through the work commissioned by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) in preparing for Heat Network Zoning legislation and the more recent techno-economic feasibility studies funded by the Heat Network Delivery Unit there has been an assessment of mine water heat opportunities. Whilst opportunities exist for the heat network in the Lower Don Valley, there are less opportunities for mine water heat in the city centre. Once complete, the techno-economic feasibility assessments will be shared and made public.

(b) Is any investigation being carried out into redirecting waste heat from buildings and manufacturing complexes into the district heating system?

A.2 Yes. As part of emerging Heat Network Zoning legislation, not only will buildings be mandated to connect to heat networks, but sources of waste heat will also be mandated to connect. As part of the DESNZ Heat Network Zoning and Advanced Zoning programmes, waste heat opportunities have been identified across the city centre and Lower Don Valley heat network areas. Within the city centre there are less industrial waste heat opportunities for the District Energy Networks but there are opportunities from sources such as data centres. Again, waste heat opportunities are being considered as part of the HNDU funded techno-economic feasibility study and once these are completed, they will be shared and made public.

Q.3 Work on resurfacing Dunkeld Road and Banner Cross Road, originally scheduled for 2017, are still subject to delays. I have been told there is a deadline of March 24 for agreeing the designs, and March 25 for carrying out the works. I understand that designs are currently with Amey for amendment, detailed design and final RSAs.

(a) Residents feel they have waited long enough. Do you agree?

(b) The roads continue to deteriorate so what can be done to expedite matters?

A.3 Despite the challenges of a global pandemic and staffing resource shortages, tremendous progress has been made by the Council, Amey and the Street Tree Partnership in collaboratively inspecting, assessing, designing and delivering a large number of engineering solutions and resurfacing works since 2018

By 2023, these endeavours had reduced the backlog of outstanding streets still requiring complex engineering works around trees to enable resurfacing works to proceed down by around two-thirds to 26.

The response to the Street Tree Inquiry committed to having designs in place for these streets by March 2024, and to have the relevant engineering works to retain these trees and allow road and footway surfacing to be completed by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

Work on the designs for the 26 roads which are still outstanding is now underway. At the time of writing (any further progress will be updated verbally, at the meeting), Amey's design team had completed the preliminary designs and road safety audits for the first 4 phases of the design programme:

Phase 1

Dunkeld Road
Banner Cross Road
Silver Hill Road

Phase 2

Sandford Grove Road
Hunter House Road
Milton Road
Steade Road

Phase 3

Kenwood Road
Chippinghouse Road
Thornsett Road

Phase 4

Crescent Road
Kenbourne Road

Ladysmith Avenue
Woodstock Road

Once these are progressed to detailed design, and have final Road Safety Audits, they will move forward to consultation with SSTP and the public.

Amey are carrying out additional inspections to ensure that the roads are safe and carry out repairs so that they are maintained in good order.

To expedite the programme, an external consultant has been commissioned to provide additional resources and progress against key milestones is being monitored.

Question of Councillor Ruth Milsom to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Richard Williams)

Q. Following on from Cllr Williams' kind response to my previous question on this topic in September, in which he agreed to actively pursue negotiations with Sheffield United, what progress has now been made in discussions around bringing the Derek Dooley sports ground football pitches in Crookes back into use for grassroots football including junior teams, and who has been involved in those discussions so far?

A. From our records and having consulted with partners both at Sheffield United and Sheffield & Hallamshire County FA, there are no clubs listed as playing on site. There are limited records covering previous years of use so while we believe no clubs have been displaced as a result of the site closing, we are unable to fully confirm this.

Data collection for the Playing Pitch Strategy was undertaken between 2017 – 2022. During this time, data collection efforts were focused on SCC owned and managed sites rather than private sites, with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, this disrupted data collection efforts so records are not fully accurate. We are now going through a process to update these records and will look to include privately managed sites for full coverage of playing field sites across the city. Therefore, while Derek Dooley Community Sports Centre is not listed within the current PPS, we hope to rectify this in our updated version of the strategy.

The Local Football Facilities Plan is the strategic investment plan for football across Sheffield, this is heavily based on the data collected in our Playing Pitch Strategy and as this site is not identified within the strategy, it would not have been included in the LFFP. However, as the LFFP aims to reflect the current and active need of investment across the city, it is unlikely Derek Dooley Community Sports Club would be included in plans as the site is not only privately operated by Sheffield United, but has also been disused for a number of years.

There are a number of alternative football provisions in the area, including 3G pitches located nearby at Goodwin Sports Centre that are available for hire and community use. For access to public open space pitches, there are football pitches located at Bolehill Recreation Ground and Ruskin Park (not currently hireable but used for informal play). Otherwise, for more formal use, there is the possibility that local schools in the area may hire their facilities for club use, we could investigate this further if there is interest.

SCC officers have attended meetings with Graham Moore, the Vice President of Sheffield United FC, who has stated that SUFC will consider the Derek Dooley Community Sports Club in their future wider plans.

Question of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee (Councillor Martin Smith)

Q. What measures does the council hold of the economic and social value to the city of free, open-access arts and culture, such as museums, galleries, public art, street entertainment, etc?

A. The Council collects data on numbers attending Sheffield Museums sites and Sheffield Theatres performances, as well as hotel bed nights and city centre footfall figures, but it is complex and costly to measure the economic and social value of specific activities and venues. This would require dedicated resources to commission the evaluation work.

However, we know from academic research that arts and culture have a profound positive impact on wellbeing, mental health, skills development, cohesion and life satisfaction. We are proud to support 6 free-to-enter museums and galleries run by Sheffield Museums, plus Site Gallery; to prioritise public art into new developments; and to run street events in the city centre for all to enjoy.

A report by The Fifth Sector on the economic value of culture and the creative industries in Sheffield and South Yorkshire can be found on the South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority website.

Questions of Councillor Bernard Little to the Chair of the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee (Councillor Martin Smith)

Q.1 Is this Council aware that the economic models made by economists produce forecasts on the impact of climate change? Which models?

A.1 Sheffield's economic evidence base, produced last year, looked at the impact of climate on the economy and this work has been used to inform the development of the City Goals. The evidence base did not use specific models to quantify the impact, but it acknowledged approaches such as community wealth building, doughnut economics and the wellbeing economy which take a wider view of the connections that economic activity has to people's health, wellbeing, equality and the environment. The report looked at a variety of data and policy areas including housing, transport, flooding and the role of green infrastructure. We are always keen to use leading ideas and research to inform our plans and policy development in the future. Furthermore, all council committee decisions and business cases now require a climate impact assessment to be undertaken so understanding the climate implications of our work is now embedded in our decision-making processes.

Q.2 Is the Council aware that these models make assumptions on impacts of various levels of global temperature change which ignores the science and that therefore no precautionary principle is being exercised? Which models?

A.2 See response above. The Council has held sustainability training and sought to learn from best practice across other Local Authorities. If Cllrs are aware of any other models, the Council would be willing to investigate them

Q.3 Does this Council recognise there is a huge disconnect between what scientists expect from global warming, and what pensioners/investors/financial systems are prepared for.

A.3 There is widespread lack of information and understanding about the impacts of the changing climate on the economy and society in general. The Council is working with other partners to increase understanding through the Sheffield Sustainability Consortium and through our communications.

Q.4 Will Sheffield Council treat climate change as a potentially existential threat to the economy, rather than an issue that is addressed by economic cost-benefit analysis?

A.4 Strategy and Resources Committee on 13th December will be considering a suite of statements which address the implications of climate change for the various committees. These are grounded in the declaration of climate emergency passed by Full Council in February 2019, which makes the scale of threat clear. The Council is in the very difficult position of managing multiple crises, some with immediate implications and others with longer term implications, in a time of financial austerity, and is working hard to achieve the best possible outcome.

Q.5 Will Sheffield Council call on stakeholders, from government, regulators, investment professionals, all the way to civil society groups and individuals, to ensure that climate policy is based on the work of scientists?

A.5 The Council's climate policy falls within the remit of the Transport Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee, however I would encourage all stakeholders and partners to ensure that their work is based on the work of climate scientists.

Questions of Councillor Brian Holmshaw to the Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee (Councillor Dawn Dale)

Q.1 On 17th November all Councillors received a list of potential disposals. This included eleven schools most of which are proposed to become academies. Please could the following information be provided for each school:

- (a) Who the Academy sponsor will be?**
- (b) The projected date for academisation?**

A.1 Each school on the previously circulated proposed disposal list is noted as below. It is noted that although these many include statutory transfers, they are for Council purposes classed as “disposals”.

Woodhouse West joined **Sheffield South East Trust (SSET)** on 1st August 2020

Stocksbridge Junior* joined **Chorus Education Trust** on 1st November 2023

Stocksbridge NI* joined **Peak Edge** Trust on 1st September 2022

Gleadless Primary is due to join **SSET** on 1st January 2024

Grenoside Primary is due to join **Peak Edge Trust**, anticipated conversion date 1st March 2024 (subject to PFI transfer requirements so may be later)

***Stocksbridge NI and Junior** are two separate schools but listed as Stocksbridge Primary in error on the list of potential disposals.

The following schools on the disposals list circulated are **Foundation Trust Schools**. Foundation Trusts differ from Academies in that they have the support of a charitable trust who can appoint Governors to the school Governing Body. Unlike academies the Trust does not have responsibility for performance etc, and Foundation Trust Schools continue to receive funding via the LA similar to Maintained Schools. However as with academies, the Governing Body is entitled to hold in trust the land and buildings forming the school on incorporation of the Trust. For these schools below, formal legal title may yet be to be transferred to the Governing Body and so these schools appear on this list as they are still classed as statutory disposals when the paper title is transferred:

Stradbroke Primary, Ballifield Primary, Sharrow Primary, Brunswick Primary.

The following schools appear incorrectly:

Shortbrook Primary and Mosborough Primary.

These two schools appear as they did receive Academy orders in the past, but the proposed academisation fell through and did not proceed. These

two schools will be removed from the list of proposed disposals before the list is next reissued.

Watercliffe Meadows

This school should not appear at all. It is not a proposed academy, and neither is it a Foundation Trust school. Its presence on the list of disposals is unknown.

To summarise, the proposed disposal list contains a mixture of schools which are or are proposed to be academies; which are Foundation Trust schools; or else appear erroneously. We will be working with colleagues to improve the accuracy of information on this list going forward and to remove those schools which should not appear. Work has already commenced to this purpose.

Q.2 Have the education Trade Unions been advised about the potential disposal of all of the schools?

A.2 Trades Unions are notified of all academy transfers via both the Portfolio Operations Group (POG) and the Portfolio Joint Committee (PJC). Academisation is a standard agenda item at both of these meetings. It should be noted though that the legal responsibility for consultation on academy conversions lies with the Governing Body of the school concerned, who are encouraged to consult all stakeholders, including Trades Unions and this is embedded within our Sheffield Asks of any school considering academisation.

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING – 6TH DECEMBER 2023

ITEM OF BUSINESS NO. 6.2 – MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON THE DISCHARGE OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE JOINT AUTHORITIES AND MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY
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QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY TO BE ANSWERED AT THE MEETING BY THE COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COMBINED AUTHORITY (COUNCILLOR TOM HUNT)

Questions from Councillor Sophie Thornton

The M17 bus service between Bradway and Jordanthorpe was axed by SYMCA in October 2022 and later reintroduced by SYMCA and TM Travel in July 2023. It has recently had its Saturday services withdrawn due to a lack of drivers and other issues. The 76A bus service between Sheffield City Centre and Chancet Wood has also been plagued by poor reliability since it was awarded to TM Travel.

1. Will you apologise to residents who have faced confusion and delay due to these repeated service changes and poor performance?
2. Was SYMCA aware of a shortage of drivers or vehicles when awarding these contracts?
3. Can you confirm whether any financial penalties have been issued due to the operator's poor performance?
4. What measures are you putting in place to improve performance and reliability of these services?"

Answer from Councillor Tom Hunt

The M17 service was withdrawn between October 2022 and July 2023 as SYMCA received no bids to operate the contract, despite a number of attempts to find a supplier. The same situation affected several services across South Yorkshire. Under current legislation, SYMCA has no power to compel an operator to bid for a contract; nor can SYMCA establish its own municipally-owned operator to compete.

South Yorkshire's bus routes are struggling from the national shortage of bus drivers. Earlier this year we faced around 200 driver vacancies in our region, and high turnover rates.

In response, the Combined Authority has spent £385,000 to deliver bus and coach driver training in South Yorkshire from April. That has helped yield some short-term results, expanding operator capacity and allowing operators to take on more routes – which is why some services were restored in July 2023.

However, SYMCA recognises that TM Travel in particular have been struggling to meet contractual expectations of service quality and reliability. SYMCA began conversations with TM Travel to formally discuss service delivery issues as early as late July.

An action plan with regular monitoring has been put in place, leading to increased driver recruitment and training and the resolution of a vehicle engineering backlog. In addition, SYMCA has taken the step of imposing financial penalties on TM Travel for each missed service (as well as not paying them for the missed service).

The reality is that deregulation of our buses has failed since the Tories introduced this change in the 1980s. It has left communities with little say over the essential services they rely on, and handed operators enormous power to raise fares and slash routes.

Sheffield is not alone in the impact being felt, bus usage has almost halved outside of London. It is a national scandal but it doesn't have to be this way. Labour has announced plans to reform the country's broken bus system and hand power and control to local communities.

Led by Oliver Coppard, the Mayor of South Yorkshire, we are going through an assessment process for a proposed bus franchising scheme in South Yorkshire. This would bring regulation of our bus routes, frequencies, fares, and tickets under local public control. We're not allowed to prejudge the decision, but people across Sheffield tell me all the time that they are keen for us to do what Manchester have already done with their buses. We're getting this work done as quick as we can.

Questions from Councillor Richard Shaw

1. Meadowhead was once the southern-most point of Sheffield's tramways, prior to the network's closure in 1960. As Leader of this Council and a member of the Mayoral Combined Authority Board, would you support a future extension of the current tram network from Gleadless Town End to Meadowhead?
2. Do you agree that such an extension would improve public transport to and from the city centre and could alleviate concerns about additional motor traffic associated with the proposed new stadium at Meadowhead?

Answer from Councillor Tom Hunt

The tram is an essential part of our mass public transport network in Sheffield and with the first tram-train system in the country it's great that the network now extends out to

Rotherham. Some of the strongest growth in patronage are on the tram-train network and I think this highlights that it is essential that we look at innovative ways of growing patronage across the tram network and this must include further expansion.

Connecting people across the city and South Yorkshire to a fast, high quality and zero emission tram and tram-train network means that they will have greater confidence in accessing jobs, training, shops and services by public transport.

That's why as well as securing funding from Government to undertake major maintenance of the existing network, the Council and SYMCA are working closely to develop our future 'Vision for Tram' including plans for expanding the network. It's essential that in considering options that any new tram lines meet community demand and value for money criteria, and also where funding and finance for new connections will be secured.

A range of options for tram connections will be considered as part of the review. This will include opening rail lines to Stocksbridge and also to Waverley, through South East Sheffield to Chesterfield, creating new routes for our tram-train services. I will ensure that officers are aware of the desire for an extension to Meadowhead. If any other members want to make suggestions then please contact me and I will ensure the team that is working on the review gets the details.

Further opportunities for people to access tram will be coming forward soon with a new station planned for Magna, close to people living in Tinsley, which will also include a new park and ride facility.

Questions from Councillor Ian Horner

1. In his recent video Councillor Hunt spoke about expanding the Tram network. Will he explain how the Labour controlled MCA increasing the tram fare from £2.00 to £2.80, a 40% increase, is meant to encourage people to use the network?
2. Labour controlled Liverpool City Region has now joined the Labour Controlled Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire in getting devolved transport funding from the Government. When will the Labour controlled South Yorkshire MCA get from the back of the queue in getting the same funding levels to help hard pressed passengers in Sheffield?

Answers from Councillor Tom Hunt

Question 1

Sadly, due to government's sustained and damaging underfunding of South Yorkshire public transport, difficult decisions around fare increases have had to be made. South Yorkshire was the most populous region in the country to receive no monies whatsoever from the Government's "Bus Back Better" (BSIP) fund. Even with

subsequent per capita top-ups from the Government, South Yorkshire has received around £30 less per head than West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester or the West Midlands.

As a result, SYMCA has seen a decline in its bus network of around 10% over the last year – despite agreeing to invest all available reserves to keep as many public transport routes operational into 2025. The cumulative effect of falling central government grants since 2010 is a 40% reduction in our region’s network. At the same time, a fall in our commercially operated network since the pandemic has seen SYMCA’s procured services budget rise from £7m to £21m.

SYMCA’s Board has therefore faced difficult choices on balancing fares, concessions, and the range of the transport network in South Yorkshire over the past year.

The Government introduced a nationwide £2 bus fare cap in November 2022. At that point, the SYMCA Board agreed to introduce an equivalent £2 tram fare cap – as part of a package of cost-of-living interventions.

This July, when it became clear that SYMCA would not receive the BSIP money we were seeking from Government, the Board decided to maximise the number of routes – including restoring services that had been cut last October. This came at the cost of difficult decisions, including raising fare caps and reducing concessions. In total, that package of interventions cost around £17m – the full discretionary sum available to the MCA.

At that point, we were expecting the nationwide bus fare cap to rise to £2.50. The Bus Fare Cap is funded by the Department for Transport, but the region must find the money for a tram fare cap. In the July decisions, the MCA decided to maintain a tram fare cap, at the higher level of £2.80.

The Government subsequently announced an extension of the £2 bus cap in October 2023, to the end of 2024. This has created an unanticipated wedge between prices. The MCA does not have the funding to address this gap, but the Mayor has directly raised this anomaly with the Transport Secretary and both Rail and Local Transport Ministers.

On the subject of extending the tram, I am strongly in favour of expanding the network by running tram-train services on the Barrow Line line. This would involve the restoration of train stations on the line at Whittington, Barrow Hill and Staveley, Eckington and Renishaw, Killamarsh and Beighton. I look forward to your support in achieving this.

Question 2

South Yorkshire faces the same funding regime as other Combined Authorities, including West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester. The only difference between us has been funding allocations by the Department for Transport.

This is an injustice, which is why Mayor Oliver Coppard launched a fair funding for buses campaign earlier this year.

Separately, Greater Manchester has moved towards a different operational model for its bus network – franchising – which in October Liverpool announced it would also pursue.

South Yorkshire is currently undertaking a bus franchising assessment – the first step of that process – and is doing so at the fastest pace yet seen in the country. We cannot pre-empt the conclusions of that assessment about the best options for South Yorkshire, but the MCA Board is active in looking at reform for our bus system, as quickly as feasible.

**QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE PENSIONS AUTHORITY
TO BE ANSWERED AT THE MEETING BY THE COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE
ON THE PENSIONS AUTHORITY (COUNCILLOR JAYNE DUNN)**

Questions from Councillor Bernard Little

1. To ensure that local government in Sheffield moves into a new climate secure energy system, does South Yorkshire Pensions Authority acknowledge that a swift, orderly transition is in everyone's interests, particularly for scheme beneficiaries, who would otherwise bear the brunt of any shortfall in pension fund assets?
2. Does SYPA recognise that, if the climate risk models used to guide investment decisions trivialise the extent of the financial impacts of climate change, it is unlikely that finance officers and trustees will have the incentives to act now?
3. Does SYPA recognise that the 'Carbon Tracker' report (Loading the DICE against pension funds" Flawed economic thinking on climate has put your pension at risk", July 2023) is a call for action by investment professionals to look at the evidence set down in the climate science literature, and implement strategies, to wind down Sheffield's fossil fuel system, based on a 'no regrets' precautionary approach?
4. How will South Yorkshire Pensions Authority respond to this report?

Answers from Councillor Jayne Dunn

Question 1

The Pensions Authority recognises the effects of climate change as the most significant risk to the value of both its assets and liabilities over the longer term, As such it has in its investment strategy agreed in March 2023 made decisions which will focus more of its investments in supporting the transition to a low / no carbon economy in line with its Net Zero Goal.

Question 2

SYPA would accept that there is no "right" set of climate scenarios and that this is a developing field. A such while noting the results of these analysis the Authority has concentrated its investment strategy on making investments in assets which will support the transition including a significant exposure to renewable energy and associated grid management technologies and other technologies which allow carbon to be removed from particular sectors of the economy as well as engaging through the Border to Coast pool with listed companies to encourage them to deliver reductions in emissions using science based targets.

Question 3

The Authority is aware of this report and as previously stated takes the view that there is no “right” set of climate scenarios and has therefore taken steps to support the decarbonisation of its portfolios in line with its Net Zero goal. However, simply disinvesting from companies even if it were technically feasible does not reduce the amount of carbon emitted by one gram.

Question 4

The Authority regularly reviews both its Climate Change policy and Net Zero Action Plan and will in the next review (to be reported in March) consider whether further actions in relation to decarbonisation of its investment portfolios is necessary to deliver the Net Zero Goal.

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