

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council of the City of Sheffield held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH, on Wednesday 14 December 2022, at 3.00 pm (3.30pm - actual commencement), pursuant to notice duly given and Summonses duly served.

**PRESENT**

THE LORD MAYOR (Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards)  
THE DEPUTY LORD MAYOR (Councillor Colin Ross)

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|---|---|--|
| 1 <i>Beauchief &amp; Greenhill Ward</i><br>Simon Clement-Jones<br>Richard Shaw<br>Sophie Thornton | 10 <i>East Ecclesfield Ward</i><br>Vic Bowden<br>Alan Woodcock                                    | 19 <i>Nether Edge &amp; Sharrow Ward</i><br>Nighat Basharat<br>Peter Garbutt                   |
| 2 <i>Beighton Ward</i><br>Kurtis Crossland<br>Bob McCann<br>Ann Woolhouse                         | 11 <i>Ecclesall Ward</i><br>Roger Davison<br>Barbara Masters<br>Shaffaq Mohammed                  | 20 <i>Park &amp; Arbourthorne</i><br>Ben Miskell<br>Nabeela Mowlana<br>Sophie Wilson           |
| 3 <i>Birley Ward</i><br>Denise Fox<br>Bryan Lodge<br>Karen McGowan                                | 12 <i>Firth Park Ward</i><br>Fran Belbin<br>Abdul Khayum<br>Abtisam Mohamed                       | 21 <i>Richmond Ward</i><br>David Barker<br>Mike Drabble<br>Dianne Hurst                        |
| 4 <i>Broomhill &amp; Sharrow Vale Ward</i><br>Angela Argenzio<br>Brian Holmshaw                   | 13 <i>Fulwood Ward</i><br>Sue Alston<br>Andrew Sangar<br>Cliff Woodcraft                          | 22 <i>Shiregreen &amp; Brightside Ward</i><br>Dawn Dale<br>Peter Price                         |
| 5 <i>Burngreave Ward</i><br>Talib Hussain<br>Mark Jones<br>Safiya Saeed                           | 14 <i>Gleadless Valley Ward</i><br>Alexi Dimond<br>Marieanne Elliot<br>Paul Turpin                | 23 <i>Southey Ward</i><br>Tony Damms<br>Jayne Dunn   |
| 6 <i>City Ward</i><br>Douglas Johnson<br>Ruth Mersereau<br>Martin Phipps                          | 15 <i>Graves Park Ward</i><br>Ian Auckland<br>Sue Auckland  | 24 <i>Stannington Ward</i><br>Vickie Priestley<br>Richard Williams                             |
| 7 <i>Crookes &amp; Crosspool Ward</i><br>Tim Huggan<br>Ruth Milsom<br>Minesh Parekh               | 16 <i>Hillsborough Ward</i><br>Christine Gilligan Kubo<br>George Lindars-Hammond<br>Henry Nottage | 25 <i>Stocksbridge &amp; Upper Don Ward</i><br>Lewis Chinchin<br>Julie Grocutt<br>Janet Ridler |
| 8 <i>Darnall Ward</i><br>Mary Lea<br>Zahira Naz   | 17 <i>Manor Castle Ward</i><br>Terry Fox<br>Anne Murphy<br>Sioned-Mair Richards                   | 26 <i>Walkley Ward</i><br>Tom Hunt<br>Bernard Little   |
| 9 <i>Dore &amp; Totley Ward</i><br>Joe Otten<br>Colin Ross<br>Martin Smith                        | 18 <i>Mosborough Ward</i><br>Tony Downing<br>Kevin Oxley  | 27 <i>West Ecclesfield Ward</i><br>Alan Hooper<br>Mike Levery<br>Ann Whitaker                  |
|   |   | 28 <i>Woodhouse Ward</i><br>Jackie Satur   |

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Penny Baker, Mike Chaplin, Ben Curran, Craig Gamble Pugh, Maleiki Haybe, Mazher Iqbal, Maroof Raouf, Mick Rooney, Gail Smith, Garry Weatherall and Paul Wood.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest made by Members of the Council.

**3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS**

**3.1 Stannington and Malin Bridge Gas Leak Incident**

- 3.1.1 The Lord Mayor (Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards) invited the Leader of the Council (Councillor Terry Fox) to comment on the major incident that was affecting residents in the Stannington, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough areas. Councillor Fox stated that the major incident which had been declared was both a significant engineering challenge and a humanitarian issue. He and local Councillors had visited the affected areas on several occasions and witnessed the pain and suffering being endured by local residents and the tireless efforts of the employees of the Council and other agencies and companies who were responding to the incident. He expressed his thanks to those responding to the incident and asked the Chief Executive to give an update on the situation.

- 3.1.2 The Chief Executive stated that on Saturday 3rd December, 2022, a water main burst in the Stannington area of the city, which caused around 1.3m litres of water to enter the gas network in the area, resulting in around 3,000 properties in the Stannington, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough areas being left without gas. Remedial work was undertaken by Yorkshire Water to repair the water main, but the water ingress has caused serious, sustained disruption to residents and businesses across the area. Cadent, who own and were responsible for the gas network, have been working on site since 3rd December to restore gas to affected properties. This has required the pumping out of all of the water that entered the network, purging pipes before repressurising the network, and then making good damage to meters, boilers and gas appliances affected by the water ingress. This incident coincided with a Level 3 cold weather alert, freezing temperatures and snowfall across the area, which made the engineering work more difficult to complete than it would otherwise have been, and has also had a significant impact for residents who have been without heating for this very cold period.

- 3.1.3 She stated that to respond to the incident, the Council declared a major incident on Tuesday, 6th December, and had put in place a full incident structure. This had included twice daily multi-agency Tactical Coordinating Groups, regular

Strategic Coordinating Groups, and an on-site bronze commander based at Lomas Hall, and this would continue until the major incident was stood down. Working with Cadent and Yorkshire Water, the Council has been coordinating the humanitarian response to the incident, which has included providing electric heaters and blankets, and non-electric items such as blankets and thermal clothing to residents, undertaking door knocking and welfare checks on known vulnerable residents, and providing other support, such as emergency accommodation when required. Adult Social Care teams have undertaken checks on all people known, and referred, to social care services to ensure that they are safe and well. The Council has utilised its cost-of-living helpline to provide additional support to residents when needed, including accessing hardship schemes.

- 3.1.4 Because of the increased use of electric heaters etc., this resulted in additional pressure on the electricity network in some parts of the affected area during the course of last week which, in turn, resulted in disruption to electricity supplies for some households, adding to the difficulties that they have faced. In response, Northern Powergrid have provided free food from mobile vans in the area, with the Council subsequently taking over the running of these, with each van serving approximately 1,000 meals per day within their location. Cadent and Yorkshire Water have agreed a compensation package for those affected – details of this are available on the Cadent website and affected households should each have received leaflets through their door setting out how to claim this.
- 3.1.5 The situation as of this morning is that 196 properties remain without gas. These were primarily in the Malin Bridge area (Holme Lane) and are mainly (but not entirely) commercial and industrial properties. However, within the 196 there are around 87 across the affected area where Cadent have not been able to access the property. Once contact is made with the resident, Cadent will reconnect the supply to these households.
- 3.1.6 The Chief Executive added that this has been a challenging and dynamic incident and the Council cannot say for certain when all properties will be reconnected, although it is the case that the numbers of affected properties have reduced dramatically in the last few days and that most now have gas reconnected. The Council would continue the response until all properties have had gas reconnected. The Council would also be putting in place a recovery strategy to support the community in returning to normality. Full lessons learned/debrief would also be conducted once the incident has concluded.
- 3.1.7 She concluded by expressing her thanks to the many people involved on the ground in the response to the incident, which include many Council staff who have dropped their work and been redeployed to assist the response, and she also expressed thanks to the residents of the Stannington, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough areas who had shown incredible resilience and community spirit.
- 3.1.8 The Lord Mayor echoed those sentiments and expressed thanks to local Ward Councillors, MPs and other Members of the Council who have assisted the response to the incident.

### 3.2 Petitions and Public Questions

The Lord Mayor (Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards) reported that one petition and questions from eight members of the public had been received prior to the published deadline for submission of petitions and questions for this meeting. She reported that the question which had been received from Paul Wade had since been withdrawn by Mr. Wade and would be asked at the next meeting of the Council. She added that a question from another member of the public had been received immediately prior to the meeting, but she had decided not to permit the question to be asked on this occasion due to its late receipt, and instead had suggested that the question, which concerned the Council's budgetary position, be asked at either the Finance Sub-Committee or the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, both of which had meetings in early to mid-January.

### 3.3 Petition Requesting the Council to Increase Payments for Residents Hosting People From Ukraine

The Council received an electronic petition containing 307 signatures, requesting the Council to increase the payments for residents hosting people from Ukraine.

Representations on behalf of the petitioners were made by Miranda Allen. Ms Allen stated that whilst the Council had advised that it was awaiting advice from the Government on any planned increase in the payment, numerous other local Councils had taken their own initiative, and had already increased their payments. In the light of the cost of living crisis, many hosts were struggling to find the extra costs required to house people which, in some cases, could result in hosts being forced to end the arrangements earlier than planned. It would be more cost effective to the Council to increase the payment in the long run as the alternative would be for the Council to find alternative accommodation for those who no longer had hosts. Since the beginning of the Hosting Scheme, in March 2022, the Government had provided very little publicity, and the Scheme was still in Phase 1, which indicated that there would be further phases, such as where the Government would match guests and hosts. This, however, had not happened and, in the meantime, more and more Ukrainians were finding themselves homeless which, given what many of them had already been through, was not acceptable. Ms Allen referred to recent comments made by Lord Harrington, who had helped set up the Scheme, and who had called for payments to be doubled for the second six months of hosting to try and keep down the number of homeless Ukrainians. There appeared to be no plans in place for when hosts were no longer able, due to the cost of living crisis or other reasons, to house people. People hosting larger families were finding it particularly difficult as the payment was the same, regardless of the number of people being hosted. The Scheme had been set up for three years, with funding specifically allocated for this. The war was showing no signs of ending, and the need for help was not reducing. Many Ukrainians were also finding it difficult to find jobs here, and had little chance of moving to live independently.

The Council referred the petition to the Housing Policy Committee. Councillor Douglas Johnson (Chair of that Committee) thanked Ms Allen for submitting the petition, and expressed his thanks to all the hosts in the city who had opened their homes to accommodate those Ukrainians who had fled war and persecution. The Council had consistently lobbied the Government on this issue, whilst being mindful of the need for fairness in terms of housing refugees from other parts of the world. Council representatives had also directly lobbied Lord Harrington, when he recently visited the city. Councillor Johnson stated that the Government had recently announced a package of measures, and one such measure included an increase in the payments to £500 per month, for a period of two years.

### 3.4 Public Questions

#### 3.4.1 Question From Geoff Cox

*Geoff Cox asked whether the leadership of Sheffield City Council would accelerate the production of the Decarbonisation Route Maps.*

In response, Councillor Julie Grocutt (Co-Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee) stated that the Council was keen to ensure that there was engagement and appropriation of the route maps with partners across the city, and this was deemed crucial to ensure their successful development and implementation. Whilst the timetable could be brought forward, the Council wanted to ensure that the maps had the full support of all stakeholders. As part of the consultation, the Council had held a climate summit in November 2022, which had been well attended by partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors. All the comments and suggestions raised as part of the consultation would be co-ordinated, and used as part of the development of the route maps. The delay in the development of the maps was not preventing action being taken, with the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee, at its meeting on 24th November 2022, approving the scope for a £3.5m Local Renewable Energy Fund, and work commencing to identify buildings and to commission audits and feasibility work as part of this initiative. Approval had also been given to match-fund two funding applications to support the techno-economic feasibility studies of extending the two district heating networks in the city, as well as assessing opportunities to integrate waste heat sources to help the decarbonisation of heat in the city. This work builds on the Heat Network Zoning Pilot that the city has been engaged with this year. The Council had successfully completed £1.1m Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funded projects at the Town Hall, Acres Hill Store and the Moor Market, with further heat decarbonisation plans commissioned for other sites to enable bidding to future rounds of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding. The Council was also delivering housing energy improvement schemes through the Homes Upgrade Grant (HUG), Local Authority Delivery 2 (LAD2) and the Energy Company Obligations (ECO Flex), and had also recently submitted bids for further funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and HUG 2, and was currently awaiting the outcome of those bids. In addition, the Council was working to improve the sustainability and mitigate the

climate impacts of decisions, projects and procurement through the development and implementation of a Climate Impact Assessment Tool. This year, the Council had also reported for the first time to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), who ran the global disclosure system for companies, cities and regions to manage their environmental impacts. A score of “A-” (A minus) had been received - only one off the highest score of ‘A’ - meaning the Council was very much at the top end of reporting cities, demonstrating best practice standards across adaptation and mitigation, and have set ambitious goals and made progress towards achieving those goals. The main area for improvement identified through the CDP reporting, was the need to have a detailed climate risk and vulnerability assessment for the city, and the Council will be addressing this next year as it would participate in the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission’s Climate Resilience and Adaptation programme.

#### 3.4.2 Question From Abdul Raheem

*Abdul Raheem said that electric Hackney Carriage taxis were very expensive to buy and had some common faults which the manufacturing company might not be able to rectify before the implementation of the Clean Air Zone. If the vehicle was off the road whilst the faults were being rectified, the drivers would still be expected to pay very high monthly payments of more than £1,000. How could a driver still pay £1000 a month while the vehicle was off the road due to on-board computer problems?*

*Mr. Raheem said that there were private businesses who were willing to rent out electric Hackney Carriage taxis in Sheffield and asked whether this was something Sheffield City Council could give some consideration to.*

*With regard to utilising the funds received from Central Government to implement the clean air zone, Mr. Raheem said he had some ideas for this and asked whether an officer from the Taxi Licensing Department would afford him the opportunity to put forward his ideas, because the vast majority of Sheffield Hackney Carriage taxi drivers may not be able afford a £73,000 electric Hackney Carriage.*

In response, Councillor Joe Otten (Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee) stated that the Licensing Service was currently carrying out engagement sessions with the trade on revisions to the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Policy. He stated that arrangements would be made for an officer of the Licensing Service to meet with Mr Raheem to discuss his ideas on vehicles. Councillor Otten added that the Council was fully aware of the costs of new Hackney Carriage vehicles which were compliant with current Council policy, and the difficulties being faced by drivers in purchasing them. Whilst the Council would explore alternative vehicles, it was keen to maintain the current wheelchair access, which it considered important for people with disabilities.

(NOTE: Mr Raheem withdrew a second question which he had submitted, as he had received an answer to his satisfaction from the Leader of the Council, prior to the meeting.)

### 3.4.3 Questions From Jenny Carpenter

*Jenny Carpenter stated that the Draft Local Plan must give a strong steer towards achieving the Council's target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The need for synergy between land use planning and public transport was evident if a 66% reduction in car use by 2030 is to be achieved, with 80% of journeys made by public transport, cycling or walking, and asked:-*

- 1. Does the Council agree that the continued deterioration of bus services will only be reversed by bringing buses into public control?*
- 2. Will the Council therefore urge the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to complete its franchising assessment as quickly as possible?*
- 3. In the meantime, will the Council encourage the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to consider buying a bus operator so that it can create an operator of last resort to keep essential services running?*
- 4. Will the Council explore the legality of ring-fencing traffic offence fines and dedicating them to improving public transport, and then let the public know the outcome?*

In response, Councillor Julie Grocutt (Co-Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee) stated that she agreed that the deterioration of bus services was having a devastating impact on residents and businesses. An attractive, reliable and affordable public transport system was key to the long-term aim of promoting sustainable transport, social inclusion and building for the future. The specific operational model for public transport is something that the Council was discussing with the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), both directly through the Mayor himself and through officer dialogue.

In relation to franchising, a number of Transport Authorities were looking into this, and she was sure that staff at the MCA were considering what this looked like for Sheffield and South Yorkshire. This piece of work had to be a priority, and the Council would be in touch with relevant officers at the MCA to expedite the matter.

Buying a bus operating company for public ownership was a complicated legal matter, but again, as the Council looked at the current network, it had to look at all options. This was something that the Council considered was worth exploring, and SYMCA officers would be asked for an update.

Any surplus income generated through certain infringements (parking charges and fines) on the highway were already ringfenced, by law, for specific purposes. This included the provision or operation of (or facilities for) public transport passenger services, environmental improvement schemes or highway improvement projects. Parking income was reported in public records.

The Council was also looking into the possibility of applying for Moving Traffic Offence enforcement, related to the Traffic Management Act, Part 6. The income generated from this would also be bound by the same legal framework as parking income, with public transport being an eligible spend.

#### 3.4.4 Questions From John Wright and Mathew Killeya

The Lord Mayor stated that John Wright and Mathew Killeya were seeking to ask questions on the same topic and therefore she would invite them both to ask their questions and then invite the Leader of the Council to respond.

*John Wright said the Council Elections on the 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 will be the first to require voters to show ID at the polling station. What plans are in place to ensure that does not exclude anyone entitled to vote, but might not have ID? Are the Council confident that there will be suitable ID available for everyone who needs it? I'm particularly worried that younger voters might be disincentivised from voting by the introduction of these new requirements.*

*Mathew Killeya said that the Government is bringing in Photographic ID as part of its Elections Act. This is set to take effect in time for next May's elections.*

*I, like many people, am concerned that this is being rushed through and that many voters will be disenfranchised because they aren't aware of the changes and don't have valid ID. I'm also worried that younger people specifically will be prohibited from voting since there are far fewer valid forms of ID that will be accepted than for older voters.*

*For those that don't have valid ID, it will become the duty of local councils to issue electoral ID documents so they can vote.*

*Has the Council started preparations for Photo ID and are officers confident that they have sufficient resources to implement this scheme, particularly given the lack of time they have been given by the Government and given the lack of clarity on the rules?*

In response, the Leader of the Council (Councillor Terry Fox) said that he too was concerned about the situation and had been receiving regular briefings from officers in the Elections Service. He said that he had a two-page response to the questions, which he would email to the questioners after the meeting, but would outline the key points now. He said the Elections Act 2022 introduces a requirement for voters to show photographic ID before being issued with a ballot paper at polling stations. The task has been made more challenging due to the fact that Elections Services across the country were still awaiting the regulations. The City Council would run a communications campaign, alongside the national media campaign, giving details to those persons who do not possess any of the required documents as set in the list, how they would be able to apply in person or online for the voter authority certificate. He said that, assuming that Parliament make the necessary regulations live, the Act comes into force on the 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2023, which was not far away to make the necessary arrangements. Councillor Fox said that the Council would be carrying out training for its staff on the new processes and polling station training would be ongoing. He said the Government would be providing some additional funding to local authorities to cover the costs of these changes, but it was nowhere near enough. The core objective for the Council would be to ensure that, by May 2023, everyone eligible to vote would be able to do so.



- 3.4.5 (NOTE: The questions which had been submitted by Robin Hughes and Nesar Rafiq, but which had not been asked at the meeting due to their absence, would receive a written response from the Chairs of the relevant Policy Committees and be published on the website.)

#### **4. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

##### **4.1 Urgent Business**

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

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

4.2.1 The Lord Mayor (Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards) reported that Councillor Jayne Dunn had given advance notice of three questions relating to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, and this had enabled Councillor Tony Damms, the Council's Spokesperson on the Fire and Rescue Authority, to make arrangements for a response to be provided at this meeting. She invited Councillor Dunn to ask her questions.

4.2.2 Councillor Dunn asked "Can the Fire & Rescue Authority please update Council on the prohibition notice served on Wicker Riverside building? When were inspections carried out, and what are the responsibilities on the landlord?"

4.2.3 In response, Councillor Damms stated that he had anticipated many more questions on this and had invited Andy Strelczenie, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (SYF&R Service), to attend the meeting to provide an update in relation to the Wicker Riverside building, and he invited Mr. Strelczenie to speak.

4.2.4 Mr. Strelczenie said that the Fire and Rescue Authority had been the enforcing authority and had issued a prohibition notice on the building, which currently had an enforcement notice in place which expires on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2023. He said he had been working closely with Nine Developments Limited, who were the landlords of the building, the Right to Management Company, put in place by the residents in 2019, and also Love Your Block, who manage the building on behalf of the residents. He said that he had intended to bring some technical officers to the meeting to provide in depth technical advice but unfortunately they were unable to attend. Andy Strelczenie said that he was encouraged by the work carried out so far, mainly around securing the necessary funding to enable the remedial works to be carried out. He said the number one priority was the residents of the building, and he thanked Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing of the City Council, for the work she was carrying out should there be a need to decant the building after the 31<sup>st</sup> of January. At the moment, the prohibition notice was still in place. Every resident of the

building had received a letter outlining the plans for the building and there was to be a virtual call for all the residents to join over the next two evenings so that they could raise any questions they had. He said that the Fire Service was also willing to meet residents face to face should they so wish. He said that it must have been a nightmare for the residents of the building, and he appreciated the problems faced by them, but was encouraged with the dialogue carried out so far with the responsible persons and that continued to be the case. He said that, given the fact that this had been ongoing for the past two years, there needed to be a clear timeline of events and to secure funding for the prohibition notice. He said that this situation was long overdue, and it was time that it was concluded.

- 4.2.5 Councillor Martin Phipps thanked the Fire and Rescue Service and Council workers for the work already carried out on this and said that it was unfair for people to live in a building where they felt unsafe and that there was a need to bring this matter to a close. Andy Strelczenie gave an assurance that he would be quite happy to provide any further information should the situation change and should the necessary funding become available so that the works could be carried out, he would keep Councillor Phipps and residents fully updated.
- 4.2.6 Councillor Dunn asked if the Government had contacted the Fire Service and asked for evidence or were they sitting back and passing the buck, and was also interested to know how closely the Fire Service had worked with the Government and whether the Fire Service had sufficient resources to deal with this matter?
- 4.2.7 Andy Strelczenie said that he had been in direct contact with the Government and that they had telephoned him two or three times the previous week asking for an update. He said that he had sent to them all correspondence from residents and that the residents had been very supportive and received regular updates. They continued to ring and speak to him asking for a weekly update and were supportive of the work being carried out by the Fire Service.
- 4.2.8 Councillor Dunn stated that it was a long time since this started and asked if this had escalated in the last six to 12 months?
- 4.2.9 Andy Strelczenie said that it was close to the two-year anniversary of issuing the enforcement notice, and the reason for serving such notice had been to put pressure on the responsible persons to carry out remedial works, but clearly this had not been the case. He said that whilst it was not normal practice to put in place a forward-facing prohibition notice as the normal protocol would be to go to a building, find an issue with it and then serve an enforcement notice, it was thought appropriate to give as much advance notice as possible to residents to enable them to find alternative accommodation. He added that it was hoped to bring this to a satisfactory conclusion, but there needed to be some firm commitment to securing funding. The residents of the building continued to pay service charges and they deserved better.
- 4.2.10 Lord Mayor thanked Mr. Strelczenie for attending the meeting to provide the

update, and Councillor Damms also thanked him for attending the meeting and added that this was a serious issue that had been going on for too long and, in his opinion, the landlords need to understand that it was time that this matter was resolved.

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

4.3 Written Questions

A schedule of questions to Chairs of Policy Committees, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16, and which contained written answers, was circulated. Supplementary questions, under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.4, were asked and were answered by the appropriate Policy Committee Chairs.

**5. ENDORSEMENT OF THE PUBLICATION DRAFT SHEFFIELD LOCAL PLAN ('THE DRAFT SHEFFIELD PLAN')**

- 5.1 It was moved by Councillor Dianne Hurst and seconded by Councillor Minesh Parekh, that, as recommended in the report of the Executive Director, City Futures, published with this agenda, seeking approval to consult on Sheffield's Publication Draft Local Plan ('The Sheffield Plan'), it be RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) approves the Publication Draft Sheffield Plan for the purposes of public consultation;
- (b) approves the consultation programme for seeking the public's view on the Publication Draft Sheffield Plan;
- (c) approves the list of 'submission documents' as defined in paragraph 4.3.3 of Appendix 1 and listed in paragraph 4.3.4 of Appendix 1 that will form part of the public consultation;
- (d) requests that any 'schedule of suggested amendments' (referred to at paragraph 1.11.2 of Appendix 1), compiled after the consultation on the Publication Draft Sheffield Plan, be approved by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee and full Council prior to submitting the relevant documents to the Government;
- (e) delegates authority to the Chief Planning Officer, in consultation with the chair, deputy chair and spokesperson of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee, to approve any non-material amendments to the Publication Draft Sheffield Plan and consultation programme prior to public consultation and any adjustments to the list of

submission documents set out in paragraph 4.3.4;

- (f) approves the further minor amendments to the Publication Draft Sheffield Plan that are recommended by officers in paragraphs 1.6 to 1.21 (and detailed in Appendix 3); and
  - (g) approves the list of additional 'submission documents' listed in paragraphs 1.22 and 1.23 of this report that will form part of the public consultation.
- 5.2 Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Tim Huggan, and seconded by Councillor Andrew Sangar, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by the addition, at the end of paragraph (a), of the words "subject to the removal of clause (a) of policy NC12 relating to hot food takeaways".
- 5.3 It was then moved by Councillor Lewis Chinchin, and formally seconded by The Lord Mayor (Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards), as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by the addition of a new paragraph (h) as follows:-
- (h)(1) notes that Site SD04 in Deepcar has been allocated as a site for housing development;
  - (2) believes that the cumulative impact of developing Site SD04 – given that the adjacent Site SD05 already has outline planning permission – would:-
    - (i) cause irreparable damage to the local Green Network;
    - (ii) further harm the landscape character of the area;
    - (iii) merge the distinct settlements of Stocksbridge and Deepcar;
    - (iv) cause a deterioration in existing local flooding issues; and
    - (v) harm local wildlife and habitats;
  - (3) believes that these same objections apply to Site SD05 which is also an allocated site but acknowledges that this site already has outline planning permission; and
  - (4) considers that allocating Site SD04 as a site for housing development would not be appropriate and therefore proposes that it be removed from the Publication Draft Plan.
- 5.4 After contributions from five other Members, and following a right of reply from Councillor Dianne Hurst, the amendment moved by Councillor Tim Huggan was put to the vote and was lost.
- 5.4.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 23 Members; AGAINST - 42 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members.)

*(Note: The result of the vote above incorporates the alteration made at the meeting of the Council held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 when approving these minutes.)*

- 5.5 The amendment moved by Councillor Lewis Chinchon was then put to the vote and was carried.
- 5.5.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 56 Members; AGAINST - 10 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members.)
- 5.6 The original Motion, as amended, was then put as a Substantive Motion in the following form and carried unanimously:-

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That this Council:-

- (a) approves the Publication Draft Sheffield Plan for the purposes of public consultation;
- (b) approves the consultation programme for seeking the public's view on the Publication Draft Sheffield Plan;
- (c) approves the list of 'submission documents' as defined in paragraph 4.3.3 of Appendix 1 and listed in paragraph 4.3.4 of Appendix 1 that will form part of the public consultation;
- (d) requests that any 'schedule of suggested amendments' (referred to at paragraph 1.11.2 of Appendix 1), compiled after the consultation on the Publication Draft Sheffield Plan, be approved by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee and full Council prior to submitting the relevant documents to the Government;
- (e) delegates authority to the Chief Planning Officer, in consultation with the chair, deputy chair and spokesperson of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee, to approve any non-material amendments to the Publication Draft Sheffield Plan and consultation programme prior to public consultation and any adjustments to the list of submission documents set out in paragraph 4.3.4;
- (f) approves the further minor amendments to the Publication Draft Sheffield Plan that are recommended by officers in paragraphs 1.6 to 1.21 (and detailed in Appendix 3);
- (g) approves the list of additional 'submission documents' listed in paragraphs 1.22 and 1.23 of this report that will form part of the public consultation; and
- (h) (1) notes that Site SD04 in Deepcar has been allocated as a site for housing development;  
  
(2) believes that the cumulative impact of developing Site SD04 – given that the adjacent Site SD05 already has outline planning permission – would:-

- (i) cause irreparable damage to the local Green Network;
- (ii) further harm the landscape character of the area;
- (iii) merge the distinct settlements of Stocksbridge and Deepcar;
- (iv) cause a deterioration in existing local flooding issues; and
- (v) harm local wildlife and habitats;

(3) believes that these same objections apply to Site SD05 which is also an allocated site but acknowledges that this site already has outline planning permission; and

(4) considers that allocating Site SD04 as a site for housing development would not be appropriate and therefore proposes that it be removed from the Publication Draft Plan.

**6. NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING "NO MORE EXCUSES ON HOUSING REPAIRS" - GIVEN BY COUNCILLOR RICHARD SHAW AND TO BE SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR SOPHIE THORNTON**

6.1 It was moved by Councillor Richard Shaw, and seconded by Councillor Sophie Thornton, that this Council:-

- (a) notes with great sadness the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, which was found by the Coroner for Manchester North to be a result of prolonged exposure to mould in his home which Rochdale Boroughwide Housing took no action to treat or prevent;
- (b) notes with concern that:-
  - (1) the Council currently has 6,193 overdue repairs logged, as of the 23rd of October;
  - (2) a significant number of the 6,193 overdue repairs are likely to relate to damp and mould, especially within the context of the Cost-of-Living crisis which has made it more challenging for tenants to heat their homes;
  - (3) several Councillors have reported that tenants suffering from damp and mould issues have felt blamed for the disrepair, rather than supported to manage the issues;
  - (4) customer complaints regarding the Repairs Service increased from 17 in 2020/21 to 115 in 2021/22;
  - (5) the Council has received more legal claims for disrepair as of the 18th of November (682) than it received for the whole of the 2021/2022 financial year (660);

- (6) cuts to legal aid over the last decade have resulted in tenants finding it significantly more challenging to bring disrepair cases to court, with tenants' only option often being to use 'no win, no fee' solicitors, who have targeted estates with high numbers of disrepair claims and often retain a large proportion of the awarded compensation; and
  - (7) Council spending on legal fees and compensation for legal disrepair claims is currently overspending by £2.6m on its £2.6m budget, and the Housing Repairs service as a whole is overspending by £7.3m, contributing to the overall HRA overspend of £12.7m;
- (c) notes that:-
- (1) the Social Housing Regulator has written to Chief Executives of all registered providers of social housing (including Sheffield City Council) requesting an assessment of the extent of damp and mould issues and hazards affecting our properties, what action we are taking to remedy these cases, and our procedures to ensure that individual damp and mould cases are identified and dealt with effectively, to be provided by the 19th of December 2022; and notes that the response to this will be brought to the Housing Policy Committee and published;
  - (2) the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has similarly written to all Council leaders with a Housing Act 2004 Section 3(3) directive to provide an assessment of damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties, an assessment of action that may need to be taken concerning this, and data on the above for the last three years, and notes that the response to this will be brought to the Housing Policy Committee and published;
  - (3) the Housing Ombudsman issued a report in October 2021 (Spotlight on Damp and Mould: It's Not Lifestyle), which contained several recommendations for member landlords, including to "review our initial response to reports of damp and mould to ensure they avoid automatically apportioning blame or using language that leaves residents feeling blamed";
  - (4) believes that workers in the Housing Repairs team are working hard to tackle the backlog, but that political mismanagement has led to the current issues facing the service; and
  - (5) believes that Council tenants deserve repairs to be completed within a reasonable timeframe, and that fulfilling this requirement is critical to keeping our tenants healthy and safe;

This Council therefore resolves to:-

- (d) support Councillor Clement-Jones's recent call at the Audit and Standards Committee on the 17th of November for an enquiry into the issues raised in paragraph (b);
- (e) request that the Housing Policy Committee considers whether to add to its work programme consideration of new approaches to handling disrepair issues, such as:-
  - (1) appropriate officers providing the Housing Policy Committee with a broad appraisal of council housing disrepair and a strategy for improvement, including how they will implement the recommendations of the Housing Ombudsman's 2021 report "Spotlight on Damp and Mould";
  - (2) creating an Alternative Disrepair Resolution Scheme, to give tenants an alternative to no-win, no-fee solicitors when seeking compensation for housing disrepair, as has been implemented by several other local authorities, including Lambeth and Southwark; and
  - (3) giving our tenants the right to directly employ an approved contractor if repairs are not carried out within an agreed time frame.

6.2 Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Fran Belbin, and seconded by Councillor Nabeela Mowlana, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by:-

- 1. the addition of the following sub-paragraphs under paragraph (c):-
  - (6) since 2010 government has significantly increased pressures on the HRA, through sustained lack of investment for local authorities and the public services which communities rely on;
  - (7) from 2010-2018 government put a cap on council borrowing for housebuilding, which significantly added to the pressure of housing waiting lists with the Council unable to build to meet demand, and that national policies such as 'right-to-buy' depletes housing stock; meaning less revenue generated for the HRA to better deal with issues related to housing repairs;
  - (8) believes it is outrageous that the last Decent Homes Standard was set in 2006 (with five Conservative prime ministers since then) and that the current government must deliver their long-awaited Decent Homes Standard for all social rented and private rented homes; and
  - (9) commits to working with all of the city's MPs in challenging



government to bring forward this legislation;

2. the addition of the following sub-paragraphs under paragraph (e):-
  - (4) an external review of Housing Repairs as part of the wider Housing Service review taking place next year, with the goal of fundamentally re-organising how the service is delivered, believing that the Council must do better in learning from other cities who are dealing with comparable problems, and ensure that best practice is being adopted throughout all housing services, including repairs; and
  - (5) adopting Selective Licensing schemes throughout the city, noting that issues in private sector housing have a considerable impact on social housing with badly maintained neighbourhoods leading to even greater pressure on council housing repairs, and believing that the city's neighbourhoods are being let down by rogue private landlords; and
3. the addition of a new paragraph (f) as follows:-
  - (f) affirms that the Council must ultimately provide a service which is geared around the needs of tenants and delivers for all of the city's neighbourhoods.

6.3 It was then moved by Councillor Douglas Johnson, seconded by Councillor Martin Phipps, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by the deletion of paragraphs (d) and (e) and the addition of new paragraphs (d) to (g) as follows:-

- (d) notes that the Housing Policy Committee has been working cross-party to monitor progress on repairs handling and will continue to do so;
- (e) notes in particular that at its meeting on Thursday 15th December, the Committee will receive a report on the Council's actions on damp and mould, annexed to which is a letter to the Government setting out our actions and emphasising the need for government to fund significant action on this serious health risk;
- (f) believes that the political choice of austerity has limited this Council's ability to inspect a significant proportion of private rented properties; and
- (g) endorses this Council's request to the Government for additional resources to support an expansion of this particularly important agenda.

6.4 After contributions from seven other Members, and following a right of reply from Councillor Richard Shaw, the amendment moved by Councillor Fran Belbin was put to the vote and was carried.

6.4.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 65 Members; AGAINST - 1 Member;

ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. The Liberal Democrat Group Members voted for, but abstained on sub-paragraphs (6) & (7) of Part 1, and sub-paragraph (5) of Part 2 of the amendment. Councillor Lewis Chinchen voted against, but for sub-paragraph (9) of Part 1, Part 2 & Part 3 of the amendment.)

- 6.5 The amendment moved by Councillor Douglas Johnson was then put to the vote and was lost.
- 6.5.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 11 Members; AGAINST - 53 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Councillor Lewis Chinchen voted for, but against paragraph (f) of the amendment.)
- 6.6 The original Motion, as amended, was then put as a Substantive Motion in the following form and carried:-

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes with great sadness the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, which was found by the Coroner for Manchester North to be a result of prolonged exposure to mould in his home which Rochdale Boroughwide Housing took no action to treat or prevent;
- (b) notes with concern that:-
- (1) the Council currently has 6,193 overdue repairs logged, as of the 23rd of October;
  - (2) a significant number of the 6,193 overdue repairs are likely to relate to damp and mould, especially within the context of the Cost-of-Living crisis which has made it more challenging for tenants to heat their homes;
  - (3) several Councillors have reported that tenants suffering from damp and mould issues have felt blamed for the disrepair, rather than supported to manage the issues;
  - (4) customer complaints regarding the Repairs Service increased from 17 in 2020/21 to 115 in 2021/22;
  - (5) the Council has received more legal claims for disrepair as of the 18th of November (682) than it received for the whole of the 2021/2022 financial year (660);
  - (6) cuts to legal aid over the last decade have resulted in tenants finding it significantly more challenging to bring disrepair cases to court, with tenants' only option often being to use 'no win, no fee' solicitors, who have targeted estates with high numbers of disrepair claims and often retain a large proportion of the awarded compensation; and

- (7) Council spending on legal fees and compensation for legal disrepair claims is currently overspending by £2.6m on its £2.6m budget, and the Housing Repairs service as a whole is overspending by £7.3m, contributing to the overall HRA overspend of £12.7m;
- (c) notes that:-
- (1) the Social Housing Regulator has written to Chief Executives of all registered providers of social housing (including Sheffield City Council) requesting an assessment of the extent of damp and mould issues and hazards affecting our properties, what action we are taking to remedy these cases, and our procedures to ensure that individual damp and mould cases are identified and dealt with effectively, to be provided by the 19th of December 2022; and notes that the response to this will be brought to the Housing Policy Committee and published;
  - (2) the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has similarly written to all Council leaders with a Housing Act 2004 Section 3(3) directive to provide an assessment of damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties, an assessment of action that may need to be taken concerning this, and data on the above for the last three years, and notes that the response to this will be brought to the Housing Policy Committee and published;
  - (3) the Housing Ombudsman issued a report in October 2021 (Spotlight on Damp and Mould: It's Not Lifestyle), which contained several recommendations for member landlords, including to "review our initial response to reports of damp and mould to ensure they avoid automatically apportioning blame or using language that leaves residents feeling blamed";
  - (4) since 2010 government has significantly increased pressures on the HRA, through sustained lack of investment for local authorities and the public services which communities rely on; and
  - (5) from 2010-2018 government put a cap on council borrowing for housebuilding, which significantly added to the pressure of housing waiting lists with the Council unable to build to meet demand, and that national policies such as 'right-to-buy' depletes housing stock; meaning less revenue generated for the HRA to better deal with issues related to housing repairs;
- (d) believes that workers in the Housing Repairs team are working hard to tackle the backlog, but that political mismanagement has led to the current issues facing the service;

- (e) believes that Council tenants deserve repairs to be completed within a reasonable timeframe, and that fulfilling this requirement is critical to keeping our tenants healthy and safe;
- (f) believes it is outrageous that the last Decent Homes Standard was set in 2006 (with five Conservative prime ministers since then) and that the current government must deliver their long-awaited Decent Homes Standard for all social rented and private rented homes;
- (g) commits to working with all of the city's MPs in challenging government to bring forward this legislation;

This Council therefore resolves to:-

- (h) support Councillor Clement-Jones's recent call at the Audit and Standards Committee on the 17th of November for an enquiry into the issues raised in paragraph (b);
- (i) request that the Housing Policy Committee considers whether to add to its work programme consideration of new approaches to handling disrepair issues, such as:-
  - (1) appropriate officers providing the Housing Policy Committee with a broad appraisal of council housing disrepair and a strategy for improvement, including how they will implement the recommendations of the Housing Ombudsman's 2021 report "Spotlight on Damp and Mould";
  - (2) creating an Alternative Disrepair Resolution Scheme, to give tenants an alternative to no-win, no-fee solicitors when seeking compensation for housing disrepair, as has been implemented by several other local authorities, including Lambeth and Southwark;
  - (3) giving our tenants the right to directly employ an approved contractor if repairs are not carried out within an agreed time frame;
  - (4) an external review of Housing Repairs as part of the wider Housing Service review taking place next year, with the goal of fundamentally re-organising how the service is delivered, believing that the Council must do better in learning from other cities who are dealing with comparable problems, and ensure that best practice is being adopted throughout all housing services, including repairs; and
  - (5) adopting Selective Licensing schemes throughout the city, noting that issues in private sector housing have a considerable impact on social housing with badly maintained neighbourhoods leading to even greater pressure on council housing repairs, and believing that the city's neighbourhoods are being let down by rogue private

landlords; and

- (j) affirms that the Council must ultimately provide a service which is geared around the needs of tenants and delivers for all of the city's neighbourhoods.

6.6.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 65 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. The Labour Group Members voted for, but against paragraph (d) of the Substantive Motion. The Liberal Democrat Group Members voted for, but abstained on sub-paragraphs (c)(4) and (5), and sub-paragraph (i)(5) of the Substantive Motion. Councillor Lewis Chinchon voted for, but against sub-paragraphs (c)(4) and (5) and paragraph (f) of the Substantive Motion.)

**7. NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING "ADOPTING THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP (APPG) ON BRITISH MUSLIMS' DEFINITION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA" - GIVEN BY COUNCILLOR ABDUL KHAYUM AND TO BE SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ABTISAM MOHAMED**

7.1 It was moved by Councillor Abdul Khayum, and seconded by Councillor Abtisam Mohamed, that this Council:-

- (a) notes that as part of the response to the Race Equality Commission, the Council has committed to making continuous improvements, develop racial literacy and eradicate racial inequalities which exist within the Council and the services it delivers, across the diverse communities we serve, and as part of this has developed a three-year improvement plan to help the Council, and more widely the city, to become an anti-racist city;
- (b) believes that to better understand all facets of islamophobia it is important to have a clear definition and, therefore, suggests the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia, that "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness", together with the explanatory guidelines put forward by the Coalition Against Islamophobia, should be considered;
- (c) notes that Islamophobia is a growing issue, both locally and nationally; Muslims were targeted in 45% of all religious hate crime offences recorded in England and Wales in 2020/21;
- (d) notes that these national figures are borne out in Sheffield, with South Yorkshire Police reporting a 43% increase in reports of Islamophobic hate crimes in Sheffield in 2021 compared to the previous year;
- (e) notes that the records show that the majority of hate crimes targeting

Muslims in Sheffield do not reach a resolution, whether that's a charge brought, a caution issued or a community-based resolution, with fewer than 15% of hate crimes in 2021 resolved in one of these ways;

- (f) agrees that, as per the Public Sector Equality Duty enshrined in the 2010 Equality Act, the Council must give due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for members of communities with a protected characteristic, including Muslims and believes this should mean they are able to participate in society on an equal footing with their non-Muslim counterparts;
- (g) believes that Islamophobia is one of the principal barriers to the participation of Muslims in public, economic, political, and social spheres of life and must urgently be addressed;
- (h) believes that:-
  - (1) adopting a definition of Islamophobia is essential to tackling Islamophobia in a targeted and effective manner;
  - (2) without a definition of Islamophobia, one cannot identify how Islamophobia manifests itself and functions and therefore, cannot devise meaningful strategies to address it; and
  - (3) the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee should consider if this definition of islamophobia, and the supporting guidelines, is incorporated as part of its on-going work into the Race Equality Commission; and
- (i) requests that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee considers whether to add to its work programme consideration of:-
  - (1) working with schools, transport companies, the police force, and other public and private bodies, to tackle Islamophobia at a local level;
  - (2) collaborating with the local Muslim community to challenge Islamophobia and to meet their needs such that they are encouraged and safe to participate in public life;
  - (3) taking further steps to tackle and raise awareness of Islamophobia, such as organising Islamophobia training, holding local events on the issue of Islamophobia, etc.; and
  - (4) working with other local stakeholders such as local MPs to raise awareness of Islamophobia in Parliament and urge the UK Government to adopt the APPG definition of Islamophobia.

7.2 Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Ann Woolhouse, and seconded by Councillor Barbara Masters, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted

be amended by the addition of new paragraphs (b) to (d) as follows, and the relettering of original paragraphs (b) to (i) as new paragraphs (e) to (l):-

- (b) notes that this country is comprised of many different ethnic groups who have joined over the centuries, that our country has rightly welcomed those who have faced persecution in their home country, and notes with pride Sheffield's role in becoming the first city of sanctuary;
- (c) welcomes the contribution at all levels of society made by immigrant communities and those born here, and regrets that prejudice holds back the contribution that they make to our society;
- (d) reaffirms that discrimination based on ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation and other protected characteristics has no place in our society;

7.3 After contributions from two other Members, and following a right of reply from Councillor Abdul Khayum, the amendment moved by Councillor Ann Woolhouse was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That this Council:-

- (a) notes that as part of the response to the Race Equality Commission, the Council has committed to making continuous improvements, develop racial literacy and eradicate racial inequalities which exist within the Council and the services it delivers, across the diverse communities we serve, and as part of this has developed a three-year improvement plan to help the Council, and more widely the city, to become an anti-racist city;
- (b) notes that this country is comprised of many different ethnic groups who have joined over the centuries, that our country has rightly welcomed those who have faced persecution in their home country, and notes with pride Sheffield's role in becoming the first city of sanctuary;
- (c) welcomes the contribution at all levels of society made by immigrant communities and those born here, and regrets that prejudice holds back the contribution that they make to our society;
- (d) reaffirms that discrimination based on ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation and other protected characteristics has no place in our society;
- (e) believes that to better understand all facets of islamophobia it is important to have a clear definition and, therefore, suggests the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims' definition of

Islamophobia, that “Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness”, together with the explanatory guidelines put forward by the Coalition Against Islamophobia, should be considered;

- (f) notes that Islamophobia is a growing issue, both locally and nationally; Muslims were targeted in 45% of all religious hate crime offences recorded in England and Wales in 2020/21;
- (g) notes that these national figures are borne out in Sheffield, with South Yorkshire Police reporting a 43% increase in reports of Islamophobic hate crimes in Sheffield in 2021 compared to the previous year;
- (h) notes that the records show that the majority of hate crimes targeting Muslims in Sheffield do not reach a resolution, whether that’s a charge brought, a caution issued or a community-based resolution, with fewer than 15% of hate crimes in 2021 resolved in one of these ways;
- (i) agrees that, as per the Public Sector Equality Duty enshrined in the 2010 Equality Act, the Council must give due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for members of communities with a protected characteristic, including Muslims and believes this should mean they are able to participate in society on an equal footing with their non-Muslim counterparts;
- (j) believes that Islamophobia is one of the principal barriers to the participation of Muslims in public, economic, political, and social spheres of life and must urgently be addressed;
- (k) believes that:-
  - (1) adopting a definition of Islamophobia is essential to tackling Islamophobia in a targeted and effective manner;
  - (2) without a definition of Islamophobia, one cannot identify how Islamophobia manifests itself and functions and therefore, cannot devise meaningful strategies to address it; and
  - (3) the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee should consider if this definition of islamophobia, and the supporting guidelines, is incorporated as part of its on-going work into the Race Equality Commission; and
- (l) requests that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee considers whether to add to its work programme consideration of:-
  - (1) working with schools, transport companies, the police force, and other public and private bodies, to tackle Islamophobia at a local level;



- (2) collaborating with the local Muslim community to challenge Islamophobia and to meet their needs such that they are encouraged and safe to participate in public life;
- (3) taking further steps to tackle and raise awareness of Islamophobia, such as organising Islamophobia training, holding local events on the issue of Islamophobia, etc.; and
- (4) working with other local stakeholders such as local MPs to raise awareness of Islamophobia in Parliament and urge the UK Government to adopt the APPG definition of Islamophobia.

**8. NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING "MOVING TOWARDS AN ETHICAL DEBT COLLECTION POLICY AND ENDING THE USE OF BAILIFFS" - GIVEN BY COUNCILLOR SOPHIE WILSON AND TO BE SECONDED BY THE LORD MAYOR (COUNCILLOR SIONED-MAIR RICHARDS)**

8.1 It was moved by Councillor Sophie Wilson, and formally seconded by The Lord Mayor (Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards), that this Council:-

- (a) believes that, due to the ideologically driven actions of the Government over the past decade, alongside a crisis in global capitalism, ordinary people in Sheffield are facing a cost of living crisis and looming recession, and that, as a result, household debt has grown to unsustainable levels;
- (b) notes that over half of all adults in the UK are in debt or seriously worried about falling in to debt;
- (c) further notes that last year, Citizens Advice estimated that 3.5 million people were in arrears with their council tax across the country;
- (d) believes that the Autumn Budget has made clear that the Government are not interested in helping residents or councils deal with the cost of living crisis and the increase in debt, instead pushing councils to increase council tax, further exacerbating the financial struggles of ordinary people and attempting to pass the blame for financial hardship on to Local Authorities;
- (e) notes that Citizens Advice estimate that 33% of council tax problems are caused by the way that councils collect the payment;
- (f) further notes that analytics group Policy in Practice have recently presented evidence that stricter collection policies, including bailiff use, do not increase collection rates;
- (g) recognises that being visited by bailiffs is a distressing experience which

can be devastating for people's mental health, and notes that over 50% of people in debt have mental health problems and people in debt are 8 times more likely to think about suicide;

- (h) notes that residents who face bailiff action are also liable for the fees they charge, which begin at £75 for the 'compliance stage' of enforcement (receiving a letter), and often rise to an average of £310 during the lifetime of a debt, and believes that, in Sheffield, this only serves to increase the level of indebtedness of many of our residents and siphons money out of our local economy, harming the city at large;
- (i) notes that in April 2018, Hammersmith & Fulham London Borough Council announced an end to bailiff action, and they have subsequently seen a rise in council tax collection rates;
- (j) further notes that Southwark LBC, Newham LBC and Bristol City Council have also recently implemented more ethical debt collection policies;
- (k) also notes that The Trussell Trust has reported in their 'State of Hunger' report that local government debt leads people to destitution and foodbank usage;
- (l) notes that the Debt Justice Campaign, using the National Audit Office's calculations to the Financial Conduct Authority, estimates that over indebtedness is costing the local and national government £9.7 billion per year in extra health, social care, employment and housing support, and believes that pushing residents into debt and poverty is a false economy for Sheffield;
- (m) also believes that ending debt collection practices such as bailiff use, makes financial sense; and
- (n) requests that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee considers whether to add to its work programme consideration of what an ethical debt collections policy could mean in Sheffield, including, but not limited to:-
  - Payment Flexibility
  - Greater discretionary support
  - Identifying vulnerable households and data sharing between departments
  - Establishing whether or not residents can afford repayments
  - Ensuring everyone in debt is given free local debt advice
  - Removing in year collections targets
  - Having an irrecoverable debt policy which mitigates for that fact that a percentage of debt will not be recovered
  - Ending Bailiff use
  - Starting open communication with Hammersmith and Fulham Council to get feedback on how their policy is having a positive effect on the

council's finances and the wellbeing of their residents.

8.2 Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Minesh Parekh, and seconded by Councillor Bryan Lodge, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by the addition of new paragraphs (n) to (r) as follows, and the re-lettering of existing paragraph (n) as a new paragraph (s):-

- (n) believes that identifying issues early is of primary importance, and notes that a report on the review of the Council's debt management policy will be the subject of a report to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee in the new year;
- (o) notes the work of the Council's cross-party Cost of Living Crisis Group, and the dedicated work of council employees in supporting residents through financial hardship, and believes that debt collection and the use of bailiffs, and its implications, need to be considered by this Group in investigating the adoption of an ethical debt collection service;
- (p) notes recent research from Martin Lewis's Money and Mental Health Policy Institute which found that 15% of people with mental health problems had missed at least three payments on one council tax bill, compared to 4% of people without a mental health problem;
- (q) believes that it is important to make the distinction between those who can't pay debt, and those who won't, when using bailiffs and that targeted support is essential as well as a compassionate understanding of each individual's circumstances, be that financial, social or health related;
- (r) believes that in the private rented housing sector, some tenants are at the mercy of rogue landlords and exorbitant rents, trapping people into a spiral of debt;

8.3 It was then moved by Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed, and seconded by Councillor Alan Hooper, as an amendment, that the Motion now submitted be amended by:-

1. the deletion, in paragraph (a), of the words "alongside a crisis in global capitalism";
2. the addition of new paragraphs (m) and (n) as follows and the re-lettering of original paragraphs (m) and (n) as new paragraphs (o) and (p):-
  - (m) notes that the Council has agreed to continue providing the Citizens Advice Bureau with grant money of £827k per year, and notes that Citizens Advice is currently not providing face to face support in most areas of Sheffield;
  - (n) welcomes the good work that Local Area Committees are doing to re-establish face to face advice services, and believes that

providing face to face support is crucial to helping residents facing complex debt issues;

3. the substitution, in the new paragraph (o) [original paragraph (m)], of the words “reducing the Council’s use of bailiffs over time”, for the words “ending debt collections practices such as bailiff use”;
  4. the substitution, in the new paragraph (p) [original paragraph (n)], of the words “Reducing the Council’s use of bailiffs over time”, for the words “Ending bailiff use”; and
  5. the addition, in the new paragraph (p) [original paragraph (n)], of new bullet points as follows:-
    - Creating a targeted approach to tax collection, as has been trialled in Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council, to identify residents who are genuinely struggling to pay their debts versus those who have the ability to pay
    - Working closely with mental health services to provide additional assistance to people with mental health needs who are in council tax arrears
    - Working with the Citizens Advice Bureau to re-establish self-referral and face to face support for complex debt
    - Fully implementing the Stop the Knock campaign’s “Six Steps for Local Authorities”, which consist of:-
      - (i) making a clear public commitment to reduce the Council’s use of bailiffs over time;
      - (ii) reviewing the Council’s signposting to free debt advice, including phone/online channels;
      - (iii) adopting the Standard Financial Statement to objectively assess affordability;
      - (iv) putting in place a formal policy covering residents in vulnerable circumstances;
      - (v) exempting Council Tax Support recipients from bailiff action; and
      - (vi) signing the Council Tax Protocol and reviewing the Authority’s current practice against the ‘Supportive Council Tax Recovery’ toolkit.
- 8.4 After contributions from one other Member, and following a right of reply from Councillor Sophie Wilson, the amendment moved by Councillor Minesh Parekh was put to the vote and was carried.

- 8.4.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 59 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. Councillor Lewis Chinchen voted for, but abstained on paragraph (o) of the amendment. Councillor Sophie Wilson voted for, but against paragraph (q) of the amendment.)
- 8.5 The amendment moved by Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed was then put to the vote and was carried in part. Parts 1, 3 and 4 of the amendment were lost and Parts 2 and 5 of the amendment were carried.
- 8.5.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 46 Members; AGAINST - 10 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 1 Member. The Labour Group Members voted for, but against Parts 1, 3 and 4 of the amendment. Councillor Lewis Chinchen abstained, but voted for Parts 1 and 2 of the amendment.)
- 8.6 The original Motion, as amended, was then put as a Substantive Motion in the following form and carried:-

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) believes that, due to the ideologically driven actions of the Government over the past decade, alongside a crisis in global capitalism, ordinary people in Sheffield are facing a cost of living crisis and looming recession, and that, as a result, household debt has grown to unsustainable levels;
- (b) notes that over half of all adults in the UK are in debt or seriously worried about falling in to debt;
- (c) further notes that last year, Citizens Advice estimated that 3.5 million people were in arrears with their council tax across the country;
- (d) believes that the Autumn Budget has made clear that the Government are not interested in helping residents or councils deal with the cost of living crisis and the increase in debt, instead pushing councils to increase council tax, further exacerbating the financial struggles of ordinary people and attempting to pass the blame for financial hardship on to Local Authorities;
- (e) notes that Citizens Advice estimate that 33% of council tax problems are caused by the way that councils collect the payment;
- (f) further notes that analytics group Policy in Practice have recently presented evidence that stricter collection policies, including bailiff use, do not increase collection rates;
- (g) recognises that being visited by bailiffs is a distressing experience which can be devastating for people's mental health, and notes that over 50% of people in debt have mental health problems and people in debt are 8

- times more likely to think about suicide;
- (h) notes that residents who face bailiff action are also liable for the fees they charge, which begin at £75 for the 'compliance stage' of enforcement (receiving a letter), and often rise to an average of £310 during the lifetime of a debt, and believes that, in Sheffield, this only serves to increase the level of indebtedness of many of our residents and siphons money out of our local economy, harming the city at large;
  - (i) notes that in April 2018, Hammersmith & Fulham London Borough Council announced an end to bailiff action, and they have subsequently seen a rise in council tax collection rates;
  - (j) further notes that Southwark LBC, Newham LBC and Bristol City Council have also recently implemented more ethical debt collection policies;
  - (k) also notes that The Trussell Trust has reported in their 'State of Hunger' report that local government debt leads people to destitution and foodbank usage;
  - (l) notes that the Debt Justice Campaign, using the National Audit Office's calculations to the Financial Conduct Authority, estimates that over indebtedness is costing the local and national government £9.7 billion per year in extra health, social care, employment and housing support, and believes that pushing residents into debt and poverty is a false economy for Sheffield;
  - (m) notes that the Council has agreed to continue providing the Citizens Advice Bureau with grant money of £827k per year, and notes that Citizens Advice is currently not providing face to face support in most areas of Sheffield;
  - (n) welcomes the good work that Local Area Committees are doing to re-establish face to face advice services, and believes that providing face to face support is crucial to helping residents facing complex debt issues;
  - (o) also believes that ending debt collection practices such as bailiff use, makes financial sense;
  - (p) believes that identifying issues early is of primary importance, and notes that a report on the review of the Council's debt management policy will be the subject of a report to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee in the new year;
  - (q) notes the work of the Council's cross-party Cost of Living Crisis Group, and the dedicated work of council employees in supporting residents through financial hardship, and believes that debt collection and the use of bailiffs, and its implications, need to be considered by this Group in investigating the adoption of an ethical debt collection service;

- (r) notes recent research from Martin Lewis's Money and Mental Health Policy Institute which found that 15% of people with mental health problems had missed at least three payments on one council tax bill, compared to 4% of people without a mental health problem;
- (s) believes that it is important to make the distinction between those who can't pay debt, and those who won't, when using bailiffs and that targeted support is essential as well as a compassionate understanding of each individual's circumstances, be that financial, social or health related;
- (t) believes that in the private rented housing sector, some tenants are at the mercy of rogue landlords and exorbitant rents, trapping people into a spiral of debt; and
- (u) requests that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee considers whether to add to its work programme consideration of what an ethical debt collections policy could mean in Sheffield, including, but not limited to:-
- Payment Flexibility
  - Greater discretionary support
  - Identifying vulnerable households and data sharing between departments
  - Establishing whether or not residents can afford repayments
  - Ensuring everyone in debt is given free local debt advice
  - Removing in year collections targets
  - Having an irrecoverable debt policy which mitigates for that fact that a percentage of debt will not be recovered
  - Ending Bailiff use
  - Starting open communication with Hammersmith and Fulham Council to get feedback on how their policy is having a positive effect on the council's finances and the wellbeing of their residents
  - Creating a targeted approach to tax collection, as has been trialled in Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council, to identify residents who are genuinely struggling to pay their debts versus those who have the ability to pay
  - Working closely with mental health services to provide additional assistance to people with mental health needs who are in council tax arrears
  - Working with the Citizens Advice Bureau to re-establish self-referral and face to face support for complex debt
  - Fully implementing the Stop the Knock campaign's "Six Steps for Local Authorities", which consist of:-
    - (i) making a clear public commitment to reduce the Council's use of bailiffs over time;
    - (ii) reviewing the Council's signposting to free debt advice,

including phone/online channels;

- (iii) adopting the Standard Financial Statement to objectively assess affordability;
- (iv) putting in place a formal policy covering residents in vulnerable circumstances;
- (v) exempting Council Tax Support recipients from bailiff action; and
- (vi) signing the Council Tax Protocol and reviewing the Authority's current practice against the 'Supportive Council Tax Recovery' toolkit.

8.6.1 (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR - 56 Members; AGAINST - 1 Member; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members. The Liberal Democrat Group Members voted for, but abstained on paragraph (a) and voted against paragraph (o) and bullet point 8 in paragraph (u) of the Substantive Motion. Councillor Lewis Chinchen voted against, but for paragraphs (m), (n), (p), (r), (s) & (t), and bullet points 1 to 7 & 9 in paragraph (u) of the Substantive Motion and abstained from voting on paragraph (q) and bullet points 10 to 13 in paragraph (u) of the Substantive Motion.)

## **9. APPOINTMENT TO THE OFFICE OF SENIOR CORONER SOUTH YORKSHIRE (WEST)**

9.1 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: On the motion formally moved by Councillor Richard Williams and formally seconded by Councillor Ruth Mersereau, that this Council, in accordance with the details set out in the report of the Executive Director, Operational Services, (a) notes that the written consent of the Lord Chancellor and Chief Coroner to the proposed appointment has been received and (b) appoints Tanyka Rawden to the office of Senior Coroner South Yorkshire (West) in accordance with the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.

## **10. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING**

10.1 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: On the motion formally moved by Councillor Dianne Hurst and formally seconded by Councillor Sue Alston, that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2nd November 2022, be approved as a true and accurate record.



**11. MEMBERSHIPS OF COUNCIL BODIES AND REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OTHER BODIES**

11.1 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: On the motion formally moved by Councillor Dianne Hurst and formally seconded by Councillor Sue Alston, that:-

(a) it be noted that, in accordance with the authority given by the City Council at its annual meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022, the Monitoring Officer had authorised the following appointments, with effect from the dates shown:-

Senior Officer Employment Committee - Councillor Dianne Hurst to replace Councillor Mike Chaplin with effect from 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

South Yorkshire Local Pension Board - Councillor Minesh Parekh to replace Councillor Mike Chaplin with effect from 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

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

Housing Policy Committee - Councillor Fran Belbin to replace Councillor Ben Curran as Spokesperson.

Senior Officer Employment Committee - (1) Councillor Mike Chaplin to replace Councillor Dianne Hurst; and (2) Councillors Steve Ayriss, Zahira Naz and Mick Rooney to replace Councillors Abtisam Mohamed, Joe Otten and Sioned-Mair Richards.

(c) it be noted that the Senior Officer Employment Sub-Committee, at its meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022, appointed Sean McClean to the post of Director of Regeneration and Development within the City Futures Portfolio and that Mr. McClean is expected to start in post on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

**12. URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS - STATUTORY OFFICER DESIGNATION: CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

12.1 The Lord Mayor (Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards) stated that Council Procedure Rule 26 states that "An item of business may be considered at a meeting of the Council as a matter of urgency, where it has not been possible to give five clear working days' notice, on the recommendation of the Chair, but the reason for such urgency must be recorded in the minutes". The Lord Mayor stated that the approval of the Council was required for the Interim Director of Finance and Commercial Services to be designated as the statutory Chief Finance Officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. The current Chief Finance Officer leaves the employment of the Council

with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, and therefore this designation needs to be approved at this meeting, as the next Council meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February is too late.

12.2 The Lord Mayor added that a report on this matter had been produced and was circulated to all Members of the Council on 13th December 2022 and had been published on the Council's website. Copies of the Motion were available at the meeting.

12.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** On the motion formally moved by Councillor Dianne Hurst and formally seconded by Councillor Sue Alston, that this Council, in accordance with the details set out in the joint report of the Council's Monitoring Officer and Director of Human Resources and Customer Services:-

- (a) notes the appointment of Tony Kirkham as Interim Director of Finance and Commercial Services with responsibility for management of the Finance and Commercial Services Directorate and line management of the other Directors in the Resources portfolio as a member of the Council's Senior Leadership Team;
- (b) agrees the designation of Tony Kirkham as Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 with effect from 1st January 2023;
- (c) notes that any specific references to the "Director of Finance and Commercial Services" throughout the Constitution include an interim appointment to that role;
- (d) agrees that the references to "Executive Director, Resources" as a Proper Officer at Part 7A and in the Management Structure at Part 7B of the Constitution be read as "Interim Director of Finance and Commercial Services"; and
- (e) agrees that generic references to Executive Directors throughout the Constitution be deemed to include the Interim Director of Finance and Commercial Services.