

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Strategy and Resources Policy Committee

### Meeting held 31 May 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillors Tom Hunt (Chair), Fran Belbin (Deputy Chair), Angela Argenzio, Dawn Dale, Douglas Johnson (Group Spokesperson), Shaffaq Mohammed (Group Spokesperson), Zahira Naz, Joe Otten, Martin Smith, Richard Williams and Minesh Parekh (Substitute Member)

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ben Miskell.

#### **2. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

4.1 The minutes of the previous meetings held on 15 March, 19 April and 17 May 2023 were approved as a correct record.

Arising from the minutes of 17 May 2023 it was:

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) agrees to appoint Members to serve on the Charity Trustee Sub-Committee as follows:

Cllr Zahira Naz (to replace Cllr Dale)  
Cllr Mary Lea (Substitute)  
Cllr Janet Ridler (Substitute);

(b) agrees to appoint Cllr Zahira Naz as the Deputy Chair of the Charity Trustee Committee; and

(c ) agrees, as respects the appointment of Members to serve on the Urgency, Charity Trustee Sub-Committee or any other Sub-Committee of Strategy and Resources, where vacancies exist or in cases of urgency to ensure quoracy or representation, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the relevant political group whip, be authorised to appoint Members to serve on such Sub-Committees, as necessary, on the understanding that details of such appointments will be reported to the next or subsequent meetings of the Policy Committee.

## **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

- 5.1 Ibrah Hussain presented a petition Petition requesting (a) Improvements to the Licensing Service's Reception Facilities, (b) Improvements to the Clean Air Zone Grant Support Scheme and (c) Additional Independent Approved Test Centres.

Response: With regards to (a) and (b), the Leader stated that last week, he and Councillor Miskell met with representative of the taxi trade association to discuss these points. I welcome that you have had, and continue to have, ongoing dialogue with the Licensing Service on this matter. This is the correct approach.

With regards to (c) the Clean Air Zone, he stated that there were a number of other questions on this matter and to avoid repetition, he would respond to all the questions together, later in the meeting. (See 5.3)

- 5.2 Nasar Raof presented a question: Being born, raised, worked and lived in Page Hall, The ongoing situation in page hall is getting worse and recent events being reported in the media where authorities are now being attacked during the course of their duties is an example of how council and police approach to Page Hall is and has been a big failure. Will the council not now but sit down and plan strategically it's approach to Page Hall and how resources are being used ? Throwing money simply just doesn't cut it any more surely ?

Response: Thank you for attending today and for the work you do in the community. As a new Leader I will be looking at issues with fresh eyes, including the issues faced in Page Hall. There are no doubt significant issues faced by the local community. If what is being done is not delivering for residents we need to look at new ideas. I am open to such new ideas to deliver a comprehensive strategy and would welcome input from yourself and the the community to co-design solutions, in the spirit of partnership.

The Page Hall neighbourhood service has created a 18 point action plan based on feedback from local residents and partners. The aim of the plan is to raise overall standards in the area and to make Page Hall a more sustainable community and includes proposals around finding solutions to issues such as environmental and pest issues, overcrowding and poor property conditions. The service is based in Page Hall and acts as a hub, designed to join up many of the services that work in the area. To find solutions we need a strong dialogue with all local stakeholders, such as yourself.

We need to find solutions by working together to share intelligence and achieve a joined up response to local issues. There are many strong links with local voluntary, community and faith groups. These relationships are vital if we are to make progress. We need to build on these further and I welcome your feedback and input from you and colleagues in Page Hall.

- 5.3 Hafeas Rehman (Sheffield Taxi Trade Association) submitted a question: We the members Sheffield Taxi Trade Association (STTA) are asking Sheffield City Council and this committee to do the right thing by extending the exemption for Taxis until June 2024.

The current leadership of SCC has committed to tackling the 'Cost of Living Crisis', taxi drivers are also affected by the Cost of Living Crisis, yet SCC is forcing taxi drivers into replacing their vehicles during these difficult times.

- 1) Does SCC recognise that taxi drivers are also subjected to the Cost of Living Crisis?
- 2) Are you aware that to replace an existing vehicle with a brand new vehicle, the cost has almost doubled since covid?
- 3) Are you aware that the cost of replacing an existing vehicle with a used vehicle has increased by over 40% since covid?
- 4) if you were not aware before you are now, so how do you expect taxi drivers to finance the change in the vehicle?

At this point, you may point toward the financial support offered by the CAZ scheme. Initially, taxi drivers were told they will receive a £10k grant to replace with an electric cab and a £6k grant to replace with Euro 6 vehicle.

- 5) Are you aware that Hackney Carriage drivers only receive up to £5k of the £6k and Private Hire only receive £2650 of the £3500 grant? The £6k and £3.5k was awarded if you take out the subsidised loan.
- 6) An electric wheelchair accessible vehicle cost approx £70k and a Euro 6 approx £40k (rear-loading wheelchair access), do you really think this is a fair deal?
- 7) The conditions of the grant until the launch of the scheme, do you think this is the right way to do business in the name of SCC, where is the transparency?
- 8) 'When were the 'conditions of grant' finalised'?
- 9) When were the elected members made aware of the 'conditions of grant'?

We are guessing the government introduced CAZ funding to encourage businesses to change over to cleaner vehicles. So would it not make sense that you would make it attractive and easy for taxi drivers to replace their vehicles by accessing the fund easily?

A vehicle to be licensed as a Hackney Carriage can not be older than 5 years (recently changed to 7.5 years) and can be licensed until its 15th anniversary, if the license is not renewed on time then after reaching its 5th anniversary then that vehicle cannot be relicensed. So we are guessing that in the business plan submitted to the government for funding all non-compliant taxis are accounted for because the aim is to replace all non-compliant vehicles.

A condition of the grant is that a vehicle has to be owned by an individual for at least one year for eligibility, we believe that this is wrong because there are many existing taxi drivers that have been Hackney Carriage drivers for several years but decided to

upgrade or downgrade for personal reasons with vehicles that are already licensed and non-compliant.

10) What is the procedure for a case-by-case consideration where an owner has owned for less than one year?

11) Are you aware that before a driver can access the grant, the currently licensed taxi has to be sold, putting drivers out of work for at least two weeks and the grant is only paid into the seller's bank account, is this acceptable?

12) Are you aware that to receive the retrofit grant, you first have to fund the retrofit works and claim the grant after submitting the receipt?

13) The cost of retrofit is over £8k, where are drivers to find the money to fund this work?

There is no local retrofitter garage. It is our understanding that other Local Authorities have made an agreement with the retrofit garages that the council will directly pay the grant to them, hence it becomes affordable for drivers.

14) Can retrofit payments be made to garages directly?

15) In 2016 STTA proposed to SCC to allow rear-loading vehicles as Hackney Carriage, so why was the Hackney Carriage vehicle specification Policy held back for several years?

16) If at the time (2016) SCC allowed policy change then the Hackney Carriage fleet would have been compliant, so why should Hackney Carriage drivers suffer due to the incompetence (or was it some sick attempt deliberately delay to keep non compliant vehicle numbers high) of SCC?

In recent correspondence with the CAZ team, we raised the ongoing issue with the availability of wheelchair-accessible vehicles, CAZ came back with a figure of over 700+ vehicles available also in the same email he is contradicting this by stating that the CAZ financial providers confirmed there is pressure on the availability of rear-loading vehicles. On challenging this outlandish figure of 700 vehicles, the CAZ team has now stated that the largest dealer of these vehicles Cab Direct has 70 vehicles in stock and can supply within one month. We have done our own test purchases with Cab Direct, they only have 20 brand-new vehicles and only 2 used vehicles at the time of call AND these cannot be delivered until August/September, priced at just under £40k.

17) Who can these drivers contact for their cases to be heard and advice given?

Taxi Licensing Section office - Since COVID taxi drivers have suffered in many ways, Cost of Living being the biggest challenge, with sky rocketing fuel prices, loss of night economy almost collapsed for Hackney Carriage drivers. Since the easing of lockdown the taxi licensing section at Staniforth Road Depot has remained closed for taxi drivers, this has led to an unfair burden on our voluntary organisation, we deal with approximately on average 20 cases per week helping drivers with issues such as

helping with applications, booking MOTs, providing forms, etc etc.

It has been over three years since the licensing office was closed to taxi drivers, over this time it has proven that this new system does not work with many issues including regular 'crashing' of the BigChange App, this failure can no longer continue we are fee paying customer and demand that the office is re-opened to taxi drivers so that they can get the service they need and deserve.

Response: Thank you for your question on behalf of your members. This doesn't fall on deaf ears. You do an excellent job in speaking up for them and I know how tenaciously you have their back.

I want to thank you for not only attending today, but also for your time last week when we met, together with my colleague Cllr Ben Miskell, Chair of the Transport, Climate and Regeneration Committee.

It was hugely appreciated to talk through some of the things we have discussed today, and that Mr Hussain has raised, not least the last two points you raised around the licensing service. And since that meeting, we have taken up some of those issues, and when we have answers back from the transport and licensing teams, we will come back to you and to continue that dialogue in the way that we would.

Right from the beginning I've said that I want to hear from people about the challenges they are facing, and it was so valuable to speak with you and to hear from your membership body about those challenges.

The transport team have provided a detailed set of responses to your questions which will be provided to you. When you have had a chance to digest them, Cllr Miskell and I would be happy to have a further conversation. Let me take a step back from the detail for a second.

There are some things that we all agree on and there are some things that are in the gift of SCC and some that are not. Clean air is a fundamental right. 1 in 20 deaths is attributable in some form to air pollution. Let us all be clear - this is not okay. We need a society wide response to this. But this has to be done fairly.

It is of course important to remember that the Clean Air Zone was mandated by government and the timing of this is far from ideal, not least because of the serious cost-of-living crisis that affects us all, and I know is affecting your trade very much. This has always been in our minds – and it's why the council and the previous Leadership team, successfully negotiated enhanced support and an additional delay of nearly 6 months specifically for hackney carriage taxis.

But of course, this doesn't go as far as we would have liked, or you would have liked. We will continue to bang the drum for Sheffield drivers so that they can get the best funding available from government. To do so successfully, and I'll repeat the point I made to you Mr Rehman last week, we need to build-up a clear evidence base to try getting more financial support from government, and what you're describing today and over the last week, and in the press, shows the limitations of government's support that has been provided.

We will keep challenging the government for far better support and bring about as much flexibility as we can to ensure the best support, is provided to you, in the fairest way.

As you have identified in your questions, there are, however, things within the gift of Sheffield City Council: the need for providing clarity and information on support, a need to respond quickly, a need for high quality customer services mindset, and the need for the Council to listen to what people are telling us and to respond accordingly.

It is clear that you and your members are not satisfied with SCC in this regard. As Leader, I will take that up with the transport service, as there is a clear discrepancy between what you and your members feel they are experiencing, and how it's intended to be experienced. And It's our job to close that gap. I won't make promises today that can't be kept, and I want to be crystal clear with you all that the government's Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU), which oversees the Clean Air Zone, have told SCC they could not extend the exemption beyond 5<sup>th</sup> June.

Thank you again for coming here today, and speaking with me recently, and to continuing our dialogue, and once you have the detailed officer answers in front of you to all of your questions, and once you and your members have reviewed these, I genuinely want to hear of your experiences as drivers, and that's the kind of dialogue we need to get into.

- 5.4 Nasar Raof presented a question: In relation to the issue of red lines, 12 hour bus lanes and changes to parking along Ecclesall Road. "Will the Council commit to writing to the mayor of Yorkshire Oliver Coppard who is wanting to push this forward".

Response: I can confirm that we will be liaising with SYMCA and the Mayor on the Ecclesall Road and Abbeydale Road schemes. These schemes are part of the South Yorkshire Transforming Cities Fund Programme, and SYMCA oversee the funding and overall management of this. Providing them with regular updates on the progress of our scheme development and delivery is something that happens on a regular basis.

It is currently planned that a report on the Ecclesall Road and Abbeydale Road schemes will be considered by the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Committee in the Summer (2023). This will consider the development of the schemes to date, the previous consultation undertaken and the proposed next steps.

- 5.5 It was noted that written response would be provided to the questions submitted by Mr Ahmed and Mr A, Hussain who were unable to attend the meeting.

## **6. RETIREMENT OF STAFF**

- 6.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement submitted a report on Council staff retirements.

- 6.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) places on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the City Council by the following staff in the Portfolios below:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Years' Service</u>
<b><u>City Futures</u></b>		
Steven Collins	Architectural Assistant Technologist	39
<b><u>Operational Services</u></b>		
Kim Knight	Library and Information Assistant	47
Jonathon Watson	Community Technician -Painter	45
Sherifa Ahmed	Neighbourhood Support Officer	43
Philip Ashton	Operations Officer	37
Caroline Bennett	Senior Information Officer and Systems Administrator	23
Cheryl Bennett	Neighbourhood Officer	20
Elizabeth Biggin	Library Development Officer Hub and Home	20
Carol Boot	Neighbourhood Operations and Development Manager SouthEast	39
Paul Bradshaw	Accommodation and Support Team Manager	37
Stephen Briggs	Community Technician - Plasterer	50
Richard Bulloss	Assistant Head Highways Maintenance Development	35
David Bunting	Senior Housing Officer	22
Elaine Burkinshaw	Neighbourhood Officer	21
Peter Carnall	Cemetery Operative	46
Timothy Chapman	Cemetery Operative	42
Stephen Cheetham	Kitchen Unit Assembly Technician	23
Lynne Clark	Senior Business Support Officer	25

Andrew Cooper	Community Technician-Joiner	38
Helen Couldwell	Income Specialist	21
David Cowen	Ward Team Leader	38
Kevin Dickinson	Gardener	42
Gary Eyre	Cemetery Area Officer	40
Diane Farrell	Library and Information Assistant	24
Susan Finney	Library and Information Assistant	39
Christine Fisher	Neighbourhood Support Officer	22
Trevor Ford	Senior Officer	20
Beverley Franklin	Library and Information Assistant	48
Deborah Frith	Tenancy Support Worker	28
Lesley Gillott	Library and Information Officer	40
Christine Gledhill	Library and Information Assistant	31
Alison Goodinson	Housing Solutions Officer	25
Yvette Hallam	Neighbourhood Officer	32
Kevin Harman-Siddall	Cemetery Area Officer	40
Ian Henderson	Senior Officer	42
Catherine Hill	Leasehold Services Manager	22
Glyn Hitchen	Neighbourhood Manager South-East	39
Julie Hoskins	Library and Information Assistance	48
Ian Jackson	Senior Engineer	44
Annette Lee	Senior Trading Standards Officer	36
Gill Loosemore	Ward Team Leader	24
Robert Maycock	Service Support Officer	38
David Melia	Gardener	43

Susan Mettam	Neighbourhood Officer	21
Teresa Hogan Watt	Ward Team Leader	35
Lorraine Whitehead	Response Operative	24
Paul Wild	Working Team Leader	40
Stephen Willis	Housing Officer	31
Gary Wood	Technical Service Manager	35
Nigel Worboys	Supervisor City Wide Services	40
Peter Wyatt	Bereavement Officer	24
Peter Yates	Community Technician - Bricklayer	40

**People**

Allie Buckingham	Senior Fieldwork Manager	38
Alison Dawson	Child Protection Coordinator	37
Glenda De Brouwer	Teacher, Lydgate Junior School	21
Joanne Knight	<u>Strategic Commissioning Manager</u>	40
Jayne Robinson	Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Carter Knowle Junior School	24
Jacqueline Stephenson	Senior Teaching Assistant Level 3, Carter Knowle Junior School	22
Angela Teasdale	Senior Teaching Assistant Level 3, The Rowan School	33
Simon Wilsher	Approved Mental Health Practitioner	31

**Resources**

Marilyne Fisher	Personal Assistant, Member Support	27
Ann Hardy	Business Partner	21
Jennie Skiba	Democratic Services Officer	50
Fiona Williamson	Personal Assistant	35

(b) extend to them its best wishes for the future and a long and happy retirement; and

(c) direct that an appropriate extract of the resolution now made, under the Common Seal of the Council, be forwarded to those staff with over 20 years' service.

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME**

7.1 The Committee received a report containing the Committee's Work Programme for consideration and discussion. The aim of the Work Programme is to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee. It was highlighted that this is a live document and Members input to it was invaluable.

7.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:- agrees that:-

(a) the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including the additions and amendments identified in Part 1 of the report;

(b) Members give consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme;

(c) approval be given to the consideration of cross cutting issues as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and

(c) the referrals from Council (petition and resolutions) detailed in Section 2 of the report be noted and the proposed responses set out be agreed.

## **8. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2023/24**

8.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement submitted a report stating that 2023/24 is a significant year for Sheffield and we have an unprecedented opportunity, alongside our communities and partners, to set out a new vision and plan for the future of our city. But to be an effective, collaborative and connected leader and partner, we need to continue our improvement journey as an organisation, learning from the recent independent reviews of SCC and delivering for the people of Sheffield.

This report sets out: 1. The progress made through our Corporate Delivery Plan and improvement journey in the last year, recognising that this has been the first phase and there is much still to do; 2. The need to develop and reset our Strategy Framework for the Council, connecting our developing City Goals with a new Corporate Plan and key cornerstone strategies which give Members, staff and the people of Sheffield a clear statement from our organisation of our values, what we want to achieve and how we will deliver; and 3. The key opportunities, issues and decisions that we will need to address in the coming year to continue our progress

and deliver for our communities.

**8.2 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) notes the progress of the council's improvement journey, recognising that, in line with the Lowcock and LGA reviews, there is significant work for SCC to do;

(b) endorses the proposal to develop a new Corporate Plan by autumn 2023, in line with the decision made at Strategy and Resources Committee on 15th March 2023 committing to the recommendations set out in the LGA Peer Challenge Action Plan;

(c) agrees to work across Policy Committees to address the key issues and decisions identified in section 3 of the report, recognising the importance of these issues to our communities and to the city's success;

(d) notes the work that is underway on the Future Sheffield transformation programme, and that the Strategy and Resources Committee will be the lead committee for this work; and

(e) agrees to the establishment of a cross-party working group for Future Sheffield, led by the Deputy Leader.

**8.3 Reasons for Decision**

8.3.1 The recommendations are critical steps in continuing the Council's strategic development and improvement and leading the change that we need to undertake as an organisation.

**8.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

8.4.1 (a) Not writing a strategic framework paper – this was rejected because it would not have provided committee members with an overview of the key challenges and opportunities for the year ahead.

8.4.2 (b) Bringing forward a full Corporate Plan at this stage in place of the strategic framework – this option was rejected as it would have precluded the level of consultation and engagement needed to produce a credible corporate plan. As set out in this paper and in the LGA Peer Challenge report, a corporate plan remains essential for the organisation and it is proposed that this paper acts as a 'staging post' to producing a full corporate plan during the autumn.

**9. DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT 2023**

9.1 To outline for Strategy and Resources Committee the near final version of the 2023 Director of Public Health Report for Sheffield.

**9.2 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) notes the 2023 Annual Report of Greg Fell, Director of Public Health, Sheffield

and the COVID-19 Pandemic. What did we learn?, appended as part of this report;

(b) further notes that in the Annual Report The Director makes specific recommendations as below:

(1) Data saves lives - In advance of another pandemic, we need to have immediate data access permissions that we managed to establish over the course of COVID to avoid any delay in getting the vital data to be able to give information to decision makers what is happening and to direct both policy and operational response.

(2) the scope of planning for pandemics and exercising - When planning for, exercising for and responding in future pandemics, we need to think about how the whole of the city is impacted, particularly with reference to those with poorest health and every sector has a role in the planning and response. Pandemic planning should include planning for communication infrastructure, maintaining education systems, job retention, economic resilience, community engagement, ensuring robust sick pay policies, systems for distribution of food and medicines. These activities are as important as modelling, stockpiling of PPE and ventilators and NHS resilience.

(3) the response cannot ignore the structural determinants of how infection spreads and poor outcomes - Planning, preparation, policy and operational response must not ignore the structural determinants of health that amplify and sustain chains of transmission, and thus outcomes;

(c) notes that the Council will publish the finalised report in due course; and

(d) requests that the Director of Public Health write to Central Government to emphasise the need to have immediate data access permissions to avoid any delay in getting the vital data to be able to give information to decision makers what is happening and to direct both policy and operational response.

### **9.3 Reasons for Decision**

9.3.1 As is traditional in DPH reports, an effort is made to focus on a small number of high level recommendations. There will be another global pandemic. It is impossible to predict when. It is thus important to learn from the covid pandemic. It was, to date, the preeminent emergency of our lifetimes. The learning and reflection exercise has been conducted in various ways both within individual service areas, across organisations in the city as a whole and across South Yorkshire.

### **9.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

9.4.1 None

## **10. ALL AGE AUTISM STRATEGY**

- 10.1 Sheffield's All-Age Autism Strategy sets the scene for supporting Sheffield to become an Autism friendly city. It is positive, ambitious, and focussed on delivering change in partnership and collaboration. The Strategy will be underpinned by an annually updated delivery plan which will have clear objectives and outcomes anticipated. This will be a partnership document, and a range of organisations will continue together to the delivery of the Strategy's objectives.
- 10.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-
- (a) approves the All-Age Autism Strategy as detailed in the report now submitted; and
- (b) requests that an update is brought to the Adult Health and Social Care and Education, Children & Families Policy Committees in six months' time, along with an update of progress made on delivery actions.
- 10.3 **Reasons for Decision**
- 10.3.1 The strategy is a positive development for the city and will enable partner organisations to work together to develop an Autism friendly city.
- 10.3.2 Approving the strategy demonstrates the Committee's commitment to partnership working across the City to improve citizens outcomes and experiences.
- 10.3.3 Approving the strategy also ensures the Council is fully compliant in its duties and responsibilities around Autism and is making a commitment to fulfil the priorities co-produced with local people to develop our approach to improving the quality of life and health outcomes for autistic people in Sheffield.
- 10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**
- 10.4.1 Do Nothing: No alternative options have been considered as the Autism Strategy is a statutory requirement set out in the Autism Act 2009