

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday 13 December 2023 by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee.

Item No

9. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR CARE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE

9.1 The Strategic Director of Children's Services submitted a report to support detailed consideration of the motion agreed by Full Council of 1st November 2023, that 'Care Experienced' is recognised as a protected characteristic by Sheffield City Council.

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

(a) notes the resolution of Full Council on 1st November 2023 regarding Care Experienced People and the context to that resolution as set out in this Report;

(b) endorses the principles set out in the resolution and confirm that the Council will regard Care Experience as a protected characteristic whilst noting that further work will be required on the implementation of those principles/changes; and

(c) agrees that further detail should be provided in the forthcoming report "Equality Framework Equality Is Everybody's Business".

9.3 Reasons for Decision

9.3.1 As corporate parent, the Council has a responsibility to provide the best possible care and safeguard children who are looked after by us as an Authority. It demonstrates Sheffield City Councils commitment as a Corporate Parent to ending the disparity and inequality faced by care experienced young people by going beyond our statutory requirements and ensuring that the needs of care experienced young people are at the heart of all our decision-making alongside other groups who formally share a Protected Characteristic.

9.3.2 By formally recognising care leavers as a protected characteristic the Committee are acknowledging those with care experience can face discrimination, stigma, and prejudice. The recognition demonstrates Committee's commitment to advancing equality of opportunity between those with care experience and those without. By making 'care experience' a protected characteristic SCC are demonstrating its commitment to Care Leavers now as opposed to waiting for national reform to impose these changes on our behalf.

9.3.3 Councillors should be champions of our looked after children and young people and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exist; and The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to have due regard to the need to:-

(A) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that

is prohibited by or under this Act;

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

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

- 9.3.4 The decision to treat care experience as a tenth protected characteristic would further cement the Council's existing strong track record as a corporate parent. Performance and outcomes for care leavers are an important proxy for the overall effectiveness of the children's social care system and the experience of children in care. It is not possible to achieve good outcomes for care leavers unless the right children come into care, for the right reasons and they are supported effectively to reach their best potential during the time they are in care.

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 9.4.1 Future national reform may introduce care experience as a characteristic under the Equalities Act in the future. This was a key recommendation from the Care Review and is currently being implemented by 72 Local Authorities nationally.

10. **DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN 2024-28**

- 10.1 The Chief Executive submitted a report setting out an ambitious four-year draft Council Plan for Sheffield City Council and draft Performance Framework which will align to our new four-year Medium Term Financial Strategy. The draft Council Plan (Appendix 1) sets out a new mission for the organisation – 'together we get things done' – which is underpinned by five new strategic outcomes. It demonstrates how we will put the people of Sheffield at the heart of everything we do and prioritise the long-term prosperity of the city, leading the transition to net zero economy while protecting and investing in our treasured local environment.

The draft Plan offers a positive vision for the role that the whole organisation can play in contributing to the city's success and helping achieve Sheffield's new City Goals.

The draft Council Performance Framework (PMF) (Appendix 2) is a vital companion to the Council Plan, enabling us to take a rigorous approach to delivering our outcomes for the city. The PMF ensures that we can drive continuous improvement and that the people of Sheffield can hold us to account for achieving our commitments.

It is proposed that the draft Council Plan will be considered as part of the forthcoming Budget Conversation for 2024/25 (launches 21st December) and then be considered by S&R Committee as a revised final draft in February 2024 with the intention of it being presented to Full Council in March 2024 alongside the proposed Budget for 2024/25.

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

- (a) endorses the draft Council Plan, as set out in Appendix 1:
- (b) agrees to enable citizens to give their views on the draft outcomes as part of the budget conversation from the 21st December 2023;
- (c) agrees to receive a revised final draft of Council Plan at the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting in February 2024;
- (d) agrees the Draft Corporate Performance Management Framework in Appendix 2;
- (e) requests that officers prepare a new Outcomes Framework to support monitoring of performance against the draft Council Plan and provide the wider measures in the Performance Framework and present this to Strategy and Resources Committee in early 2024; and
- (f) agrees to receive annual reports providing an overview of performance against the proposed outcome framework once agreed.

10.3 Reasons for Decision

- 10.3.1 The draft Council Plan provides a clear and positive statement of purpose and ambition for the whole council. It is aligned to our four year Medium Term Financial Strategy and the draft outcomes will increasingly become the focus for our budget and Directorate Plans over the coming year.
- 10.3.2 It is recommended that we seek citizen views on the new draft Plan alongside our budget proposals for the coming year so that citizens can see how we are seeking to invest in delivering our outcomes. We will then ensure that Strategy and Resources Committee and ultimately, Full Council, can consider the draft Plan alongside the proposed 2024/25 Budget in March 2024.
- 10.3.3 Similarly, the draft Council Performance Framework is a vital companion to the draft Council Plan. It will complement the new Plan, enabling citizens to hold us to account for achieving our outcomes and priorities.

10.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 10.4.1 (a) do nothing – rejected – as set out in the Strategic Framework 2023/24, we are committed to developing and agreeing a medium term plan for the council that sets out what we want to achieve for the city in the coming years and how we will contribute to the City Goals. The Council Plan is part of our Policy Framework and a critical step in our continued development as an organisation, connecting the ambitions and priorities of the administration to our Medium-Term Financial Strategy, workforce plans, Council Performance Framework, and Directorate Plans. It also ensures that we deliver on one of the key recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, further demonstrating our strategic development and maturity as an organisation.
- 10.4.2 (b) extend the Corporate Delivery Plan – rejected – the Corporate Delivery Plan

has provided vital stability and focus for the organisation over the last year, building on the One Year Plan, and bringing clear focus onto a number of key challenges that citizens wanted to see improve. However, the Corporate Delivery Plan was deliberately short term and as recommended by the LGA Peer Team, it is important to bring medium-term focus for the Council so that citizens, staff and partners understand our priorities and ambitions.

11. COST OF LIVING STRATEGY UPDATE

11.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement submitted a report providing an update on the cross-city Cost of Living response, including the Winter Plan. It also provides an update on plans to spend a previously ringfenced fund from the Household Support Fund (delegated to the Director of Communities) and sets out the approach that responds to recent Full Council motions.

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

(a) notes the approach outlined in this report that responds to recent relevant Full Council motions;

(b) notes the report's update on amounts previously ringfenced from the Household Support Fund and the plan to allocate amounts that are now available to the application scheme; and

(c) approves the adjusted ring fenced spend, as detailed in the report, and notes it as being consistent with the delegation to the Director of Communities in the 12 July 2023 Strategy and Resources Committee report.

11.3 Reasons for Decision

11.3.1 The recommendations build on the commitments made by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 31 May 2022 and 5 June 2022 and 12 July 2023 to support Sheffielders through the Cost of Living crisis. Working with communities and partners across the city, the recommendations ensure that SCC will continue to play a leading role through the strategic and tactical incident-type response.

11.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

11.4.1 Allocate the ringfenced amount to another aspect of the response. This was dismissed as it would not address the risks associated with increased demand for the application scheme and it would not help us to meet the objectives of the Full Council motions.

11.4.2 Target the ringfenced amount to specific groups. Dismissed, as outlined above because we were unable to obtain information that would allow us to make the targeted payments and people in this group are able to make an application for the household support fund.

12. COMMITTEE CLIMATE STATEMENTS

12.1 The Executive Director of City Futures submitted a report that:

1. Responds to the Annual Climate Progress Report 2022/23 in a timely manner;
2. Restates the cross-party council commitment to taking what action we can to address the climate emergency, adapt our city and council for a changing climate and reduce emissions to achieve our ambition to be a net zero city and council by 2030; and
3. Increases understanding of the impact climate change will have on committees, the opportunities that tackling climate change offers, and the contribution to climate and net zero action each committee is currently making and needs to make moving forward.

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

(a) welcomes the Committee Climate Statements, as detailed in the report now submitted, and notes that these are work in progress and will evolve over time; and

(b) requests that each Policy Committee consider and, if not previously agreed, agree (with or without amendments) their respective statement to ensure that the proposed actions contained in such statement are reflected in their Work Programme.

12.3 **Reasons for Decision**

12.3.1 It is important that the response to the Annual Climate Progress Report is open and transparent in setting out the challenges which the local authority faces in making progress and clarifies future expectations on the part we all have to play in addressing climate change.

12.3.2 Committee do not currently have specific strategic goals for climate. The process required to develop these, and have the statements approved to be read at each committee meeting meant that option 5.2 in the report was not feasible with the available resource and timeframe.

12.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

12.4.1 Not providing committee climate statements considered due to the resource required to collate.

12.4.2 Providing more detailed Committee Climate Statements that provided an overview of strategic climate goals, with each Chair then reading the committees statement publicly at their respective committee meeting following release of the report

13. **QUARTER 2 BUDGET MONITORING AND STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE BUDGET OPTIONS**

- 13.1 The Director of Finance and Commercial Services presented a report updating the Committee with the Council's revenue outturn position for 2023/24 as at Quarter 2.

The report also sets out new financial pressures facing the Strategy and Resources Committee in 2024/25, and budget options including savings, fees, grant and other income available to the Council to offset these pressures.

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

(a) notes the updated information and management actions provided on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn as described in this report;

(b) notes the budget proposals presented to the Policy Committee; and

(c) notes this Committee's initial response for budget proposals set out in this report, including savings set out in Part B of this report.

13.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 13.3.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget.

13.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 13.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balanced budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.