

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday 24 January 2024 by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee.

Item No

9. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUSINESS PLAN AND HRA BUDGET 2024/25

- 9.1 The Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out the 2024/25 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. Each year the HRA Business Plan is reviewed and updated to set budgets and charges for the year ahead and to provide an updated 5-year plan and 30-year affordability profile.

The report provided the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee with an update on the current national and local housing context, regulatory requirements, the priorities for Committee action alongside capital and revenue spending plans for 2024/25 and indicated that the Housing Policy Committee will then be responsible for overseeing the scrutiny and, delivery of those plans on behalf of the Council housing tenants of Sheffield.

The HRA Business Plan had also been considered by the Housing Policy Committee at its meeting on 14th December 2023.

In addition to the recommendations contained in the report, the meeting received details of an additional recommendation in respect of rents for temporary accommodation, details of which were set out in paragraph 2.16 of the report.

- 9.2 **RESOLVED:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee recommends to the meeting of Full Council on 7 February 2024 that:-

(a) the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan report for 2024/25 and the HRA Business Plan priorities for 2024/25, as set out in the Financial Appendix to this report are approved;

(b) the HRA Revenue budget 2024/25, as set out in the Financial Appendix to the report is approved;

(c) notes that once adopted by the City Council, monitoring the delivery of HRA Business Plan priorities will be within the remit of Housing Policy Committee and a regular performance reporting schedule will be approved;

(d) rents for council dwellings are increased by 7.7% from April 2024 in line with the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard;

(e) garage rents for garage plots and sites are increased by 7.7% from April 2024;

- (f) the sheltered housing charge is increased by 6.7% from April 2024;
- (g) the burglar alarm charge is increased by 6.7% from April 2024;
- (h) the furnished accommodation charge is increased by 6.7% from April 2024;
- (i) there is no increase to the community heating charge at this time; and
- (j) rents for temporary accommodation are increased by 7.7% for 2024/25.

9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 9.3.1 The report and its recommendations, sets out the scale of the challenge ahead, the limited resources available and the difficult decisions that now need to be taken to deliver a balanced HRA budget for 2024/25 and for the overall 30-year viability. The delivery of a balanced HRA budget is dependent on setting a 7.7% rent increase for Council tenants as set out in this report

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 9.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balanced in year HRA budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced over 30 years. No other alternatives were considered.

10. **CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL RESOLUTION RELATING TO ADOPTING THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP (APPG) ON BRITISH MUSLIMS' DEFINITION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA**

- 10.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement presented a report proposing that the All-Party Parliamentary Group's (APPG) definition of Islamophobia and the associated guidance statements be adopted by Sheffield City Council, and requesting that the Strategy and Resources Committee consider particular actions to target Islamophobia as part of its forthcoming consideration of the Equality Framework and action plans.

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

(a) formally adopt the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia, as described in the report, but in doing so agrees that the definition does not and will not be interpreted in such a way as to impinge on protected free-speech rights of any person, and that the term "anti-Muslim hatred" is used in any context where there is the potential for any uncertainty in the intended impact;

(b) formally adopts the associated guidance statements as developed by the Coalition Against Islamophobia; and

(c) request that as part of the action planning process being undertaken to

support the Council's Equality Framework, that specific actions be identified that focus on eliminating Islamophobia.

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

10.3.1 In adopting the APPG definition, the council will be taking a first step in allowing it to identify how anti-Muslim hatred manifests itself and functions and therefore, devise meaningful strategies to tackle it. Furthermore, adopting the APPG definition of Islamophobia would signal to British Muslim communities that Sheffield City Council recognises the specific issues that they face, and reassure them that combatting Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred is a priority, in line with our recently adopted race equality commitments and draft equality goals.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 Two alternative options were considered:

The first is for Sheffield City Council (SCC) not to adopt the APPG definition of Islamophobia. This was dismissed as it would not support our commitment to become an anti-racist organisation and city, and would not be in line with our Council Plan and Equality Framework commitments.

The second option considered was for SCC to adopt a bespoke definition of Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hatred. This was dismissed because such a definition would not be widely known or understood and would mean that Sheffield was using a different definition than other places that have adopted the APPG definition

11. **PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2024/25 FOR THE STRATEGY AND RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE**

11.1 The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out the key priority areas for capital investment for the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee relating to Essential Compliance and Maintenance and provides an overview of potential projects and priorities for the years 2024 to 2029, together with an overview of anticipated developments and challenges up to 2052.

The Committee is asked to endorse the general approach to inform the Council's overarching Capital Strategy (which will be brought to Full Council for approval in March 2024)

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

(a) endorses the proposals set out in the report now submitted; and

(b) notes that the proposals will now be included in the draft Capital Strategy to be submitted to Full Council for approval in March 2024 and, if approved:

(1) Officers will work with Members to consult with relevant stakeholders (including with partners, staff, trades unions [if required] and in respect of equalities and climate change) on the proposals in this report to inform final project proposals;

(2) Officers will work to develop any necessary detailed implementation plans for the proposals in this report so that the proposals can be implemented as planned; and

(3) Approval for detailed proposals will be sought as part of the monthly capital approval cycle by the Finance Committee.

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

11.3.1 Members are asked to note the unsustainable financial position highlighted by the medium-term financial analysis presented to Strategy and Resources Committee in September 2023. This report and its recommendations set out how capital projects can continue to be developed and delivered, despite the limited resources available and continue to deliver quality infrastructure for the people of Sheffield.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balanced budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. Committee is invited to comment upon and endorse the current proposals to form part of the Council's wider Capital Strategy for 2024/25.

12. **SHEFFIELD CITY GOALS**

12.1 The Chief Executive and Angela Foulkes, Chief Executive and Principal at The Sheffield College and Chair of the City Goals Working Group, presented a report detailing the development of Sheffield City Goals, a joint project led between partners across the City of Sheffield. The report provides (i) an overview of the process behind developing the Goals, (ii) presents the finalised City Goals for endorsement and (iii) highlights ongoing work with partners to develop a delivery structure with new partnership arrangements which will assist organisations and people across the city to work together to achieve the Goals.

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

(a) notes the process by which the City Goals have been developed, including extensive community engagement and involvement across two separate phases in 2023;

(b) endorses the finalised set of City Goals, subject to potential minor amendments based on discussions with Sheffield City Partnership Board taking place at their Board meeting on Friday 19th January;

(c) notes the strategic links between the City Goals and future Council strategies and plans, particularly the current draft Council Plan;

(d) notes the intention to continue ongoing work with partners to develop a delivery structure with new partnership arrangements which will enable people and organisations across the city to work together to achieve the City Goals; and

(e) notes that officers will provide an update to Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on progress and next steps for the City Goals in 6 month's time.

12.3 Reasons for Decision

12.3.1 The City Goals are the strategic link between Sheffield City Council (SCC) activity (as outlined in the draft Council Plan) and the wider ambitions of the city. As Sheffield's civic leader, SCC is one partner but has a significant role to play in the delivery of the City Goals, connecting our democratic and community leadership to the shared vision for the future. The recommendations for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to endorse the City Goals are therefore a vital statement to citizens and partners of our commitment to supporting a new shared vision for the city

12.3.2 SCC's support for and involvement in the City Goals work also ensures that we are delivering against the commitments made in the LGA Peer Challenge Action Plan.

12.3.3 The driving principle behind the City Goals, which has galvanised thousands of people to be involved in their development, is that as a city we are more than the sum of our parts. The aim of the Sheffield City Goals is to ensure that all organisations and groups can work towards the same vision for Sheffield. As well as aligning our efforts, the Goals provide a way to better coordinate the city's time, energy and resources, and to collaborate effectively to create a city to be proud of.

12.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

12.4.1 Now the City Goals are finalised, the alternative is for SCC not to endorse them - enabling partners to continue the work but without SCC support. This option was rejected as we are the civic leader of place, we are ambitious for our city and our determination to deliver a bright future for Sheffield can only be achieved with and alongside our communities and our partners.

13. MAJOR EVENT HOSTING OPPORTUNITY

13.1 The Executive Director City Futures submitted a report containing details of

opportunities for Sheffield to bid to host two sporting events. The purpose of the report is to brief the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on the event hosting opportunities and to obtain approval for the financial and resource contribution required from the Council to support these Events.

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

(a) notes that Sheffield has been selected as the host City should the UKs bid for the events named in the report be successful;

(b) approves Sheffield to bid in conjunction with the relevant Associations to host the events referred to in the report;

(c) notes the financial contributions in section 1.1.5 and 1.2.5 of the report, towards the staging costs for the respective events and that by proceeding the Council is committing to those sums should the bids be successful;

(d) agrees that as the financial implications arise in future years they should be factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy; and

(e) notes that the proposed venues are currently operated by Sheffield City Trust who will be involved in preparing the bid, and that arrangements are in place via the Leisure procurement for the commitments to pass to the new operator of the venues from 1st January 2025.

13.3 Reasons for Decision

13.3.1 Recommendations are made on the basis that that these events provide a number of positive outcomes for the people and city of Sheffield as follows:

- provides economic benefit and worldwide exposure for the city
- will drive footfall and increase dwell time in the city in support of local businesses (economic benefit)
- raise the profile of Sheffield as a major event hosting destination (brand exposure)
- will provide for community and civic engagement across the legacy development initiatives for both events

13.3.2 A further report will be brought back to members by way of update after the outcome of the bids are known.

13.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

13.4.1 The option not to host the Events has been considered, however in the context of the contributions set out in section 2 of the report, and subject to contractual agreements, it would feel like an opportunity missed for the City to not support these events.