

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Strategy and Resources Policy Committee

Meeting held 21 February 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Tom Hunt (Chair), Fran Belbin (Deputy Chair), Angela Argenzio, Dawn Dale, Dianne Hurst (Group Spokesperson), Douglas Johnson (Group Spokesperson), Ben Miskell, Shaffaq Mohammed (Group Spokesperson), Zahira Naz, Joe Otten, Martin Smith, Richard Williams and Mike Levery (Substitute Member)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Penny Baker.

2. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 It was noted that appendix 1 to the report at item 14 was not available to the public or press because they contain exempt information. If Members wished to discuss the exempt information, the Committee would ask the members of the public and press to kindly leave for that part of the meeting and the webcast would be paused.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR INABILITY TO VOTE ON THE SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX CHANGE

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the previous meetings held on 24 January 2024 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Isabel Oleary attended to present the following questions that she had submitted:

Given Sir Mark Lowcock's recommendation number 11 that the Council should consider improvements to its information management, both in record keeping and in communication with the public, can the Leader provide specific examples of improvement?

I ask this question in the light of my knowledge of specific examples of recent poor information management. These include late or no responses to FOI requests, lack of retention of files that were sent to the Lowcock Inquiry, lack of responses to direct emails to officers and bizarrely, the apology to the courts being published not in Sheff News but placed directly in the archive.

Answer: As well as the matters that the Council got seriously wrong, the report also recognised issues that stem from years of funding cutbacks. We are in the process of making investments in our infrastructures and people even though we continue to face funding issues, as the budget report we are considering today shows.

This reinvestment is being led by the Future Sheffield programme, which has been reported to this Committee previously and will be updated here in the future and I hope you will see that progress is being made. Some improvements will take time, but we are committed to getting this right.

Specifically in response to your last point - the Street Tree Archive is a publicly accessible resource. It was set up to ensure that all information produced by the Council remains publicly available and in one place. The Council communicated directly with key stakeholders and interested persons to inform them that the apology to the courts had been added to the archive.

5.2 Russell Johnson attended to present the following questions that he had submitted:

1. SCC's Continuing Difficulty Accepting Challenge.

(a) Does the Leader share my concern that senior Officers are able to underperform by persistently failing to respond to communications, offering only repeated empty apologies when they do feel pressed to communicate, and manifestly fail to properly carry out their duties with no apparent sanction?

(b) Is it the Leader's view that the process for monitoring and, where relevant, acting on clear demonstrated incompetence, is currently sufficiently robust and timely? Thus ensuring that his Council administration led by Labour is able to move towards establishing a reputation of competence following years, nay, decades, of failure?

(c) Will he personally meet with concerned citizens to confidentially discuss Officers' performance so that he becomes more aware of such issues than is perhaps possible from their narratives alone?

(d) Would the Leader confirm that he believes that all in public service, whether elected or appointed, should adhere to the Nolan Principles and that prompt action where there is breach is necessary for organisations such as SCC to carry credibility with the public who fund their salaries or allowances?

Answer: Thank you for your question. Any matter of underperformance or incompetence is taken seriously by this council. There are clear processes for tackling performance or disciplinary matters for all officers, including senior and statutory officers of the council.

As the Leader of the Council, I fully support the Nolan Principles as a foundation for public service and I believe that the council has taken a proactive approach to demonstrating this through work such as the Street Tree Inquiry, our peer review and the Race Equality Commission.

But I will always listen to concerns from residents and if any matters of individual competence are referred to me, I will of course ensure that they are appropriately investigated.

2. Continuing Poor Performance - FOIRs and Complaints

Lowcock's Ultimate and Complete Truth 'Tablets of Stone' recommendations were released to the awestruck Council last March. This resulted in reassurances that there would be greater openness. However, FOIRs continue to be delayed and obstructed. In addition, some formal complaints have been 'in process' for ridiculously long periods of time.

(a) Is the Leader disappointed by this?

(b) If he is, does he expect improvement?

(c) Does SCC still take the view once expressed to me by the Chief Executive, that seekers of accountability should "just ask", rather than submit Requests?

Answer: Firstly, I want to say that I am absolutely committed to improving performance on Freedom of Information Requests and complaints. I see this as a key element of the Council's commitment to openness and honesty.

I understand and share your frustration that progress on improvements in this area have not been quicker. Volumes of new information requests continue to increase year-on-year and this is challenging to manage given the council's significant resource constraints.

An audit of the Council's FOI practices was carried out in May 2023 by the Information Commissioner's Office. An action plan has been developed and agreed by the Information Commissioner's Office and I fully expect to see improvements going forward. Progress on this will be monitored and performance reporting will be shared publicly.

In response to your last point, many people write to the Council or contact us through our contact centres every day for information and are given swift and accurate support. This is in line with principles of open government. Most of the time contacting the Council with an enquiry will get the information desired and by adding more to our archives we are also finding ways to make information accessible without the need for a formal request. So yes, I would encourage people to ask but I would also say that the formal requests route is important as it enables people to access the information they want or need through subject access requests and freedom of information requests.

5.3 Jonathan Feldman attended to present the following questions that he had submitted:

As a Jewish resident in Sheffield I am keen that my views are not represented by a synagogue I am not affiliated to.

Can the Council commit to ensuring that Sheffield Jews Against Israeli Apartheid will be able to participate in the new multifaith initiative especially given that the employment tribunal found this week that anti-Zionist beliefs qualified as a philosophical belief and thus also qualified as a protected characteristic pursuant to section 10 Equality Act 2010?

Answer: There has already been concerted effort to bolster interfaith dialogue over the last few months, including through work with an organisation called the Blackley Centre who specialise in supporting interfaith relations and convening interfaith conversations. We will work with faith leaders to support the development of a new Interfaith Compact for the city with the intention of launching this later in 2024.

We will seek for this to be an inclusive process, involving as many different faith communities in the city as possible.

I have asked officers to provide you with a more detailed response in writing.

5.4 June Cattell attended to present the following questions that she had submitted:

Your report to this meeting (Item 12) omits any reference to the recent ruling by the International Court of Justice and the immediate measures that Israel should take to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people. In the recent meeting held between the leader of the council and representatives of the steering group of the Sheffield Palestine Coalition, it appeared the leader was reluctant to acknowledge the serious findings of the judges at the ICJ and that it was sufficient for everyone to adopt a 'wait and see' approach.

Does the Council agree that everyone has a moral duty to do what they can to prevent genocide? Does the Council agree that there are steps it could take, however small, to minimise the risk that Sheffield Council could be supporting, however indirectly, Israel's actions in genocidal acts against the Palestinian people in Gaza?

Answer: I have been clear throughout this conflict that justice and international law must be upheld and I fully support the legal process underway at the ICJ.

I stated clearly at the meeting of Full Council on 7th February that the provisional measures set out in the ICJ's interim ruling must be followed. I said that it is imperative that Israel must comply with the orders of this ruling in full and said that I joined others in pressing for these orders to be implemented.

I want to reiterate that the loss of civilian life in Gaza and the humanitarian catastrophe that we now see is absolutely heartbreaking and that the UK government should be doing all it can to secure an immediate ceasefire and the restarting of peace talks.

I've had constructive conversations with the Sheffield Coalition and I'm grateful to them for engaging in these discussions positively and for taking the time to

share their views with me.

5.5 Hilary Smith attended to present the following questions that she had submitted:

Your report (item 12) refers to a number of demonstrations taking place in the city over the last few months. Are you aware that there has been at least one protest every single week in this city since mid October calling for a ceasefire, and that every single national protest in London has been supported by at least one full coach from Sheffield. Is the council aware of any issue in the last 50 years which has resulted in this extraordinary level of protest and active solidarity over a sustained period of time in Sheffield?

And yet the Council continues to be silent on the question of whether it should put a public statement of solidarity with the Palestinian people on its website.

Your report refers to differing strongly held views amongst Sheffield residents, but the report and the Impact statement characterise these as if talking about groups of people who support different football teams in the city, either United or Wednesdays. As if both points of view should be given equal weight and equal consideration by the Council. I reject this point of view and I invite the Council to do the same. It is the 2.4 million people of Gaza who are facing starvation and death by a combination of disease, untreated illness and injury, and military attacks. It is the occupied and oppressed people of Palestine who need our solidarity.

This is not a situation where the Council should or can stay neutral. Silence in the face of genocidal acts is complicity.

Will the Council make a public statement expressing solidarity and support with the Palestinian people?

Answer: The report we are considering today makes it clear that deep concerns have been raised by very many people about the violence and deaths in Gaza and the unresolved conflict. It rightly states that there are strongly held views amongst Sheffield residents regarding this issue, however I wouldn't characterise the EIA in the way that you have.

I don't believe that the council is or has been silent on the issue of the conflict. At the council meeting on 1st November the council passed a motion which:

- Condemned "the tragic loss of civilian life in both the Hamas terrorist attacks on the 7th of October and the ensuing bombardment of the Gaza strip by Israel";
- Stated that "there can be no justification for the loss of innocent lives, and all atrocities committed against civilians must be condemned and investigated";
- Made it clear that "all UK political leaders must call upon the Israeli Government to ensure enough food, water, medicine and electricity is provided to Gaza, that there must be clear humanitarian corridors, and that all actors must follow and be held accountable under international law"; and
- Called upon the UK Government to "call for an immediate ceasefire and to vote for this at the UN".

This resolution is published on the council's website and it was also submitted to the UK Government.

Sheffield was the first UK city of sanctuary and has a proud track record of standing up for those who have suffered human rights abuses or have fled to Sheffield from oppressive regimes around the world. I know from conversations with you that this is a part of the city's history that you and others are proud of, as am I.

The report that we will be considering later in this meeting demonstrates how the council is responding to the concerns raised about the ongoing conflict in Gaza by many in the city. I would like to thank you and other members of the Sheffield Coalition for taking the time to meet with me twice to help inform the content of the report.

The report reconfirms the council's continued recognition of the State of Palestine as a full, sovereign, and independent nation and outlines the ongoing appeals for donations to support the humanitarian effort in Gaza.

The report also confirms that the council has no relationship with any of the companies listed in the UN Human Rights Council's latest update.

A further report to be discussed by the committee later recommends that the Council enters into a friendship agreement with the city of Nablus.

A vote is due to take place in Parliament this evening on a motion urging an immediate ceasefire and I am sure that all members of this committee would urge all parliamentarians to vote for an immediate ceasefire, as I do.

5.6 Val Johnson attended to present the following questions that she had submitted:

The Council has been asked on several occasions about the fact that it banks with Barclays.

As a major customer of Barclays bank will you write to Barclays to ask them if they plan to review their investments and loans to companies which produce or sell weapons to Israel's military?

If you are not prepared to do this, can you explain why not?

Answer: The Council's contract with Barclays was procured in line with our ethical procurement policy. This allows us to ask for and take into consideration how the contract will generate social value within the city and more broadly.

However, I do not intend to write to Barclays because our ethical procurement policy does not allow us to take into account non-commercial matters that are prohibited by the Local Government Act 1988. This would include the set of issues that the questioner is concerned about.

We are currently conducting a review of our ethical procurement policy as part of developing a wider Commercial Strategy for the organisation. I will ensure that concerns raised by campaigners will be considered and taken into account as part of the review.

When our banking contract comes up for renewal we will procure it in line with the law and with our revised ethical procurement policy.

5.7 Calvin Payne attended to present the following questions that he had submitted:

Does the Leader of the Council share my dismay at Sheffield again recently appearing in the national news for all the wrong reasons? The mystery surrounding the Gleadless masterplan was reported by the BBC, whilst the Market Tavern demolition saw a word used that we have come to recognise - misleading.

Since the Lowcock report the council have repeatedly promised that honesty and transparency are at the core of their way of doing things. When will the people of Sheffield start to see any evidence of this welcome new behaviour?

Answer: Honesty and transparency are a key part of the Council's core values and are very important to me personally. Unfortunately, this does not mean that the Council will never make mistakes. What is more important is how we respond.

I want to be clear that I share your concerns about the Market Tavern. The decision to demolish the pub was not taken lightly and throughout the process partners should have been kept fully informed.

I am disappointed that this does not appear to have been the case and that people have been provided with inaccurate information.

We have written to partners to apologise and have asked that an internal investigation takes place to understand exactly what went wrong and determine any actions required.

5.8 Calvin Payne attended to present the following questions on behalf of Justin Buxton who was unable to attend:

Following the council's recent (carefully qualified) apology to the Lord High Chancellor for misleading courts by misrepresenting a meaningless document as a genuine contractual document. In July 2017 Sheffield City Council submitted sworn evidence to Leeds High Court and Justice Males in pursuit of an injunction against those protecting Sheffield's street trees stating, 'For the avoidance of doubt, the vast majority of street trees in Sheffield are being retained (30,000 out of 36,000).' Has the council sought independent advice from a lawyer to ascertain whether or not this sworn statement was less than accurate? Bearing in mind the then secret contractual obligation embedded in the Streetsahead contract to fell 17,500 street trees, regardless of their health or any other circumstances."

Answer: The Council committed to make apologies for those wrongs identified by Sir Mark in his report. The apology to the court does that in full and without reservation based on the Inquiry findings.

Having set up the Inquiry with a broad remit and allowing it access to all the information held by the Council, including the information you refer to, we have not reinvestigated matters or sought advice where the Inquiry did not make any finding.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

6.1 There were no Members' questions.

7. RETIREMENT OF STAFF

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

7.2 **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 Directorates below:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Years' Service</u>
<u>Children's Services</u>		
Shaun Larkings	Buildings Supervisor, Halfway Nursery Infant School	43
<u>Strategic Support Services</u>		
Linda McBean	Team Leader	45

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

(c) directs 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.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

8.1 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.

It was noted that the report contained recommendations in respect of a number of cross cutting issues and the most appropriate decision making Committee for these items. In relation to the Commission of Social Care Case Management System item it was reported that the Finance Committee did not feel that they were the correct Committee to consider this item. As a result, it was suggested that this Committee should give authority for either the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee or the Adult, Health and Social Care Policy Committee to take the decision on this issue, subject to discussions between the relevant Chairs of those Committees.

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

(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 follows:

A framework for Growth: Principles and Priorities	Strategy and Resources Committee
Violence against Women and Girls, Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy	Strategy and Resources Committee
Commission of Social Care Case Management System	Either Education, Children and Families Policy Committee or the Adult, Health and Social Care Policy Committee

; and

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

9. REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024-25

9.1 The Director of Finance and Commercial Services submitted reports containing proposals with regard to the Council's Revenue Budget for 2024-25 and the Capital Strategy for 2023-2053.

The purpose of the Revenue Budget report is to:

- recommend to Full Council the City Council's revenue budget for 2024/25, including the position on reserves and balances;
- recommend to Full Council to approve a 2024/25 Council Tax for the City Council; and

- recommend to Full Council to note the levies and precepts made on the City Council by other authorities.

The purpose of the Capital Strategy and Budget Book 2024-2054 is to provide a snapshot of our capital programme for the period 2024-2029, together with the background and context for our capital investment over this period and for the next thirty years.

In addition, the Director of Finance and Commercial Services submitted a supplementary report providing details of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority Precept and details of the decisions taken at Finance Committee on Monday 19th February regarding premium Council Tax charges. The supplementary report set out newly stated recommendations featuring both these elements.

At the meeting the Director of Finance and Commercial Services outlined details of an additional recommendation to be added in respect of a delegation of authority to the relevant Director to increase fees and charges where they have been considered by a Policy Committee as part of the budget process and are included in Appendix 3 - Committee External Income of the Sheffield City Council Revenue Budget 2024/25.

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

1. As regards the Revenue Budget , approves for submission to the meeting of the City Council on 6th March 2024, the recommendations in the Revenue Budget report, as set out below:-

(i) To approve a net Revenue Budget for 2024/25 amounting to £543.815m;

(ii) To approve a Band D equivalent Council Tax of £1,932.56 for City Council services, i.e. an increase of 4.99% (2.99% City Council increase and 2% national arrangement for the social care precept);

(iii) To note that the Section 151 Officer has reviewed the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves, in accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003. Further details can be found in Appendix 5 and within the Section 25 Statutory Statement on Sustainability of Budget and Level of Reserves from paragraph 2;

(iv) To note that, if overspends against the agreed budgets emerge, then Executive Directors and Directors will be required to develop and implement plans to mitigate fully any overspend, within 2024/25, in consultation with elected Members;

- (v) To approve the savings as set out in Appendix 2;
- (vi) To approve the revenue budget allocations for each of the services, as set out in Appendix 4a;
- (vii) To note that, based on the estimated expenditure level set out in Appendix 4 to this report, the amounts shown in part B of Appendix 6 would be calculated by the City Council for the year 2024/25, in accordance with sections 30 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992;
- (viii) To note the information on the precepts issued by the South Yorkshire Police & Crime Commissioner and of South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority, together with the impact of these on the overall amount of Council Tax to be charged in the City Council's area;
- (ix) To note the precepts issued by local parish councils which add £676,767 to the calculation of the budget requirement in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992;
- (x) To approve the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategies set out in Appendix 7 and the recommendations contained therein;
- (xi) To approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy set out in Appendix 7, which takes into account the revisions proposed for 2024/25 onwards;
- (xii) To agree that authority be delegated to the Director of Finance and Commercial Services to undertake Treasury Management activity, to create and amend appropriate Treasury Management Practice Statements and to report on the operation of Treasury Management activity on the terms set out in these documents;
- (xiii) To approve a Pay Policy for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 8;
- (xiv) To agree that (a) the Members allowances scheme introduced in 2022/23 be implemented for 2024/25 and (b) to note that the Independent Remuneration Panel will review the Scheme each year, to make sure the scheme supports the governance structure and the roles and responsibilities of elected members;
- (xv) To note the determination of the Finance Committee on Monday 19th February 2024 to implement a second homes premium (as defined in the

report to that Committee) from 1st April 2025;

(xvi) To note the determination of the Finance Committee on Monday 19th February 2024 to bring forward the chargeable period of the Long Term Empty premium from 2 years of unoccupation to 1 year of unoccupation with effect from 1st April 2024; and

(xvii) Except where the decision is to be taken by the Council as a Charity Trustee, to delegate authority to the relevant Director to increase fees and charges where they have been considered by a Policy Committee as part of the budget process and are included in Appendix 3 - Committee External Income of the Sheffield City Council Revenue Budget 2024/25.

2. As regards the Capital Strategy, approves the submission to the meeting of the City Council on 6 March 2024, the recommendations:-

(i) To approve the contents of the Capital Strategy and the specific projects included in the years 2024/25 to 2028/29;

(ii) To note that the block allocations are included within the programme for noting at this stage and detailed proposals will be brought back for separate Member approval as part of the monthly monitoring procedures; and

(iii) To approve the proposed Capital Programme for the 5 years to 2028/29 as per Section F of the Capital Report.

9.3 Reasons for Decision

9.3.1 The City Council on 6 March 2024 meets to consider the Revenue Budget for 2024/25 and to determine the Council Tax for that year. The report provides information to enable the Council to set a budget and determine the Council Tax. The proposals set out in this report provide for a balanced budget to be recommended to Full Council.

Approval of the Capital Strategy and Budget Book will endorse the Council's proposed approach to capital investment for the next five years and will approve the capital programme to date set out at Section F.

9.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

9.4.1 A number of alternative courses of action are considered as part of the Business Planning process undertaken by Officers before options are recommended to individual policy committees. The recommendations made to Members represent what Officers believe to be the best options available to the Council, in line with Council priorities, given the constraints on funding and the use to which funding is put within the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

9.4.2 It is a requirement for all local authorities to produce a Capital Strategy.

10. COUNCIL PLAN

10.1 The Chief Executive presented a report setting out a final draft of an ambitious four-year Council Plan for Sheffield City Council following public consultation.

The Council Plan aligns directly to our four-year Medium Term Financial Strategy. The new Plan sets out a clear mission statement for the organisation – ‘together we get things done’ - and five strategic outcomes for the organisation.

The commitments in the new Plan are our contribution to deliver Sheffield’s City Goals, ensuring that we will always put people at the heart of what we do and prioritise the long-term prosperity of the city, leading the transition to net zero economy while protecting our treasured local environment.

Since the committee endorsed the draft Plan in December, citizens, employees and partners have given their views via the Have Your Say Sheffield hub and a summary of this feedback is included in the report and in Appendix 2.

The Council Plan has been updated to reflect the feedback we have received and this is in Appendix 1.

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

(i) notes and thank citizens, employees and partners for comments and insights provided on the draft Council Plan as part of the Council Plan and Budget Conversation;

(ii) notes the updates and amendments that have been made in line with the feedback on the draft Council Plan; and

(iii) recommends the proposed Council Plan, as set out in Appendix 1, to Full Council for consideration at its meeting on 6th March 2024.

10.3 Reasons for Decision

10.3.1 The 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 Following consultation, the recommendation to Strategy and Resources Policy Committee will enable Full Council to consider the proposed Plan alongside the proposed 2024/25 Budget in March 2024.

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. DELIVERY OF THE CITY'S HERITAGE STRATEGY

- 11.1 The Executive Director City Futures submitted a report responding to the request from Full Council that the Heritage Strategy for Sheffield be added to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee workplan.

The endorsement of Strategy and Resources Policy Committee is requested against the initial actions identified, plus support for exploration into creating and sustaining a Sheffield City Council Heritage Officer post to help continue this work with the sector.

The Strategy and Resourced Committee is also recommended to formally adopt the Joined Up Heritage Sheffield Heritage Strategy.

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

(i) agrees to adopt the Heritage Strategy appended, as developed by Joined Up Heritage Sheffield;

(ii) notes the progress already being made in embedding heritage in Sheffield City Council policy and activity;

(iii) endorses the initial Heritage Strategy Action Plan actions identified;

(iv) support the exploration of ways to create and sustain a Sheffield City Council Heritage Officer post to help continue this work with the sector; and

(v) notes that implementation of the Heritage Action Plan will be monitored over a 12 month period and future reports will be brought to this committee.

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

11.3.1 The motion passed by Full Council noted (in summary) that:

- the Heritage Strategy for Sheffield is unique in being a community-led strategy, created from the ground up by grass roots organisations;
- the aim of a Heritage Strategy is to protect and enhance a city's heritage and invigorate interest and development; believing that Sheffield's heritage is defined in its widest sense including not only physical assets such as historic buildings and structures, archaeological sites, historic townscapes and landscapes, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, but also museums and art galleries and their collections, archives, libraries, public art, natural habitats, people and communities, spoken stories and much more;
- Sheffield's unique heritage is particularly inclusive, embracing the customs, traditions and skills developed locally, such as the 107 languages spoken, radicalism, anti-slavery campaigning, music, our working men's clubs, and Sheffield as the Home of Football;
- the importance of Heritage to our city recognises its social, environmental, educational and well-being benefits and its economic potential;
- the Heritage sector is an important source of economic prosperity and growth with a total GVA (Gross Value Added) of £36bn, supporting over 500,000 jobs nationally.

By formally adopting the Sheffield Heritage Strategy, Strategy and Resources Committee endorses all the benefits set out above.

The attached Action Plan sets out a way forward for Sheffield City Council to fulfil its role and further benefit from the opportunities which heritage offers.

In order to respond most positively to the heritage agenda, additional officer capacity would be needed to fulfil this potential.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 Over recent years, Sheffield City Council has come to value the city's built heritage and distinctiveness through successful developments such as Kelham Island and Heart of the City, as well as community-based projects run by the University of Sheffield like Roots and Futures.

By adopting the Heritage Strategy and Heritage Action Plan, Sheffield City Council demonstrates support and leadership to maximise the benefits of heritage to the city.

While heritage-positive attitudes and priorities can be built into many areas of

the Council's work, we are severely limited by lack of capacity in developing this beneficial area of work.

An alternative approach would be to reject the idea of exploring a dedicated Heritage Officer. If this approach was taken, much of the activity outlined in 1.13 and the Action Plan will either not take place or will happen slowly and in a piecemeal way.

12. UPDATE ON SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL'S ACTIONS RELATING TO THE ONGOING CONFLICT IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

12.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement presented a report considering a series of actions to be undertaken by Sheffield City Council responding to concerns expressed by local people in relation to the ongoing conflict in Gaza and the humanitarian situation that continues to unfold. It also responds to a recent Full Council motion, which amongst other things, called for the Strategy and Resources Committee to consider whether Sheffield City Council should join the Sheffield Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid.

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

(i) notes that the aims of the Sheffield Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid are ones that Sheffield City Council may not lawfully implement, and therefore to note that the Council cannot join the Sheffield Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid;

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(ii) notes the concern of many people in Sheffield about the loss of civilian life in Israel and Palestine, to note the actions of many people in Sheffield who have campaigned against the ongoing violence, particularly in Gaza, and those who have fundraised to support the victims of the conflict, and to note the options available for Sheffield people to donate to the humanitarian response should they so wish;

(iii) notes that Sheffield City Council does not have any contractual relationship with any of the companies named in the UN Human Rights Council as enabling or supporting the construction or continued existence of illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and to note that the Council will always procure services in line with its Ethical Procurement Policy; and

(iv) notes Sheffield City Council's continued recognition of the State of Palestine as a full, sovereign, and independent nation, as set out in the resolution of Full Council on 4 September 2019.

(NOTE: The result of the vote on resolution (i) was FOR - 11 Members; AGAINST - 2 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members.

12.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 12.3.1 By adopting the recommendations, the Council will demonstrate how it is responding to the concerns raised about the ongoing conflict in Gaza by many in the city, whilst ensuring that it acts in accordance with the legal framework laid down by Parliament.

12.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 12.4.1 The only alternative option considered was to join the Sheffield Coalition against Israeli Apartheid. As discussed in the body of the report, this option was likely to be unlawful and, as such, was discounted.

13. **INTERNATIONAL UPDATE**

- 13.1 The Executive Director City Futures submitted a report (a) noting that, in November 2023, Strategy & Resources Committee approved proposals for a new Partner City Policy, including assessment criteria for the purposes of assessing new approaches and reviewing the effectiveness of existing international relationships; and (b) providing a summary of the assessments recently undertaken in respect of both existing relationships and approaches received and makes recommendations in respect of decisions required of the Committee. The report also provides a summary of activities and events, linked to our international relations that have taken place over the last 12 months

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

(i) For the reasons set out in the report, agrees that the City Council:

- a) Relinquishes the relationship with Anshan;
- b) Does not reinitiate the Trade and Collaboration Agreements with the cities of Daqing and Nanchang;
- c) Retains the relationship with Chengdu;
- d) Retains links with Bapaume;
- e) Acknowledges the links with Estelí whilst acknowledging that this relationship is community-driven, rather than Council-led;
- f) Retains links with Bochum; Kawasaki; Khmelnytskyi and Pittsburgh;
- g) Takes no further action at this time in respect of the relationship with Donetsk;
- h) Acknowledges the historical and community links in the case of Kotli and the historical links with Kitwe, noting that the civic relationship in respect of each city is effectively dormant;
- i) Enters into a Friendship Agreement with Nablus; and
- j) Carries out further work in respect of identifying the potential opportunities with locations in South Korea.

(ii) That the Committee acknowledges the important role of the Lord Mayor in

respect of fostering new international relationships and helping to maintain existing links with Partner Cities.

13.3 Reasons for Decision

13.3.1 Development of the Partner City Policy included a commitment to undertake a follow-on review of all existing international relationships. Prior to this exercise, it is unclear whether any such review had ever been implemented previously.

13.3.2 The outcome of the review is that the City Council is able to focus on developing relationships with a much more manageable number of international locations which have a genuine desire to collaborate and where specific benefits can be identified.

13.3.3 This report presents the Council's first annual International Update. The intention is that a transparent overview of Sheffield's activities within the international arena will be provided each Municipal Year.

13.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

13.4.1 The alternative option is to retain the status quo. The development of proposals for a Partner City Policy, approved by Strategy and Resources Policy Committee in November 2023, was an acknowledgement that retaining the status quo was not appropriate. The review of existing international relationships is a direct result of that decision.

(NOTE: During the discussion of the above item the Committee agreed, in accordance with Council Procedure rules, that as the meeting was approaching the two hours and 30 minutes time limit, the meeting should be extended by a period of 30 minutes).

14. MULTI AGENCY RECOVERY FOLLOWING THE STANNINGTON, MALIN BRIDGE AND HILLSBOROUGH GAS OUTAGE (DECEMBER 2022)

14.1 The Executive Director City Futures presented a report outlining ongoing recovery actions following the significant gas outage and its associated impacts at Stannington, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough in December 2022, as well as introducing and sharing the multi-agency learning following this incident.

The report contains the following appendices:

Appendix 1 – Externally produced, multi-agency debrief report (closed item)

Appendix 2 – Recovery Coordinating Group case study and recommendations.

14.2 **RESOLVED:** That the public and press be excluded from the meeting before further discussion takes place on the grounds that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, if those persons were present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as described in paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

14.3 The meeting discussed the exempt information contained in Appendix 1 – Externally produced, multi-agency debrief report.

14.4 At this stage in the proceedings, the meeting was re-opened to the public and press.

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

(i) notes and acknowledges the Recovery Coordinating Group case study and recommendations report (Appendix 2); and

(ii) notes for information that the externally produced multi agency debrief report (Appendix 1 – closed item), acknowledging the delivery of these recommendations is being monitored through the Local Resilience Forum.

14.6 **Reasons for Decision**

14.6.1 Debrief and learning lessons post incident is standard national and local practice and in line with the national resilience standards of expectation, the learning shared as part of the attachments fulfils this requirement.

14.6.2 Sharing these lessons identifies across other agencies nationally is standard practice, in line with the processes put in place via the Cabinet Office, this will be achieved through sharing the learning resources outlined at section 1.6 (b) of the report.

14.7 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

14.7.1 It is best practice, following a major or significant incident to firstly identify learning to enable responder agencies to update and amend any plans or processes. It is nationally promoted this is achieved through a multi-agency debrief as was carried out in following the significant gas outage at Stannington, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough. It is common practice for this learning to be shared across different organisations nationally that this experiential learning can be applied in different regions. The Recovery Coordinating Group have developed products and tools to further support this and offer a more immersive, realistic “on the shelf” exercise.