

Council – 2nd December 2021

Petitions Received from Members of the Public

Name	Petition	Co-Operative Executive Member
Christopher Beck	<p>Traffic Island Barrier and Traffic Calming – Opposite the Meditation Centre, Ecclesall Road</p> <p>The petition has been signed by 9 people.</p> <p><u>Response from Councillor Douglas Johnson (Executive Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport)</u></p> <p><i>Hello Christopher,</i></p> <p><i>Thank you for the Petition regarding the area around the pedestrian crossing at Hunter’s Bar roundabout. I am not sure if you attended the full council meeting last week but, if you did, you will have seen it was derailed by industrial action. However, here is a response to your petition, after I have consulted with transport officers.</i></p> <p><i>As I am sure you will appreciate, there are a number of old pieces of highway infrastructure across the city, which do not necessarily conform to modern design standards. Given the funding constraints, it will be a large and expensive task to retrospectively make all junctions, crossing and layouts meet modern standards across the whole network. Unfortunately, this crossing does not feature in our road safety investment programme plans given the need to address other, more dangerous sites across the City.</i></p> <p><i>However, as you know, the Connecting Sheffield proposals for Ecclesall Road are now live and we are looking to see how we can improve the pedestrian movements in the Hunter’s Bar area. I have asked the team to look at the crossing as I want to use any opportunity to make the new layout as pedestrian friendly as possible, with movements that will be made easier, clearer and safer for people using it.</i></p> <p><i>We are also proposing to remove the uphill bus lane between Hunter’s Bar Roundabout and Rustlings Road and bus stop near the roundabout. This would reduce the need for vehicles to merge immediately after the</i></p>	Councillor Douglas Johnson

	<p><i>roundabout near the controlled crossing and allow a smooth flow of traffic towards Ecclesall Road South. This will also contribute towards more consistent bus journey times. This is just one example of how we are developing this larger scheme with a close look at the detail to try and capture any improvements like this along the corridor, aligned to our objective of making Sheffield's transport network safer.</i></p> <p><i>The proposals for Ecclesall Road are available on the Connecting Sheffield website at https://connectingsheffield.commonplace.is/proposals/abbeydale-road-and-ecclesall-road.</i></p> <p><i>Regards, Douglas</i></p>	
<p>Alyssa Widdowson</p>	<p>Public Toilets in City Centre</p> <p>The petition has been signed by 17 people.</p> <p><u>Response from Councillor Mazher Iqbal (Executive Member for City Futures, Development, Culture and Regeneration)</u></p> <p><i>Dear Alyssa,</i></p> <p><i>Following your submission of the above petition (via the Council's website) to the Council meeting on 1 December 2021, I am writing to let you know what the current position is with regard to this.</i></p> <p><i>An overview of the current offer is:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Since the pandemic hit we have a number of temporary toilets in the Peace Gardens and these will be in place until the end of March.</i> <i>• The Sheffield BID run the LAVS Scheme LAVS (sheffieldcitycentre.com) which encourages businesses to allow use of their facilities with no pressure for the customer to buy or use other services. Unfortunately, the number of businesses willing to do this since the pandemic started has declined. The BID are looking at wider options and what can be done to make it more appealing and grow the scheme again.</i> <i>• The Moor Market has remained open throughout and offers free use of the facilities which also has an accredited Changing Places room.</i> <i>• We are hopeful that in the early new year we will be providing more additional temporary facilities around Fargate.</i> 	<p>Councillor Mazher Iqbal</p>

	<p><i>We are working on new developments to include permanent facilities both in Pounds Park and in the wider Heart of the City 2 development as well.</i></p> <p><i>I hope you find this information helpful.</i></p> <p><i>Yours sincerely,</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Mazher Iqbal</i></p>	
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Questions Received from Members of the Public

Name	Question	Co-Operative Executive Member
Paige Shepherd	<p>When we have dozens of empty buildings in our city that have sat that way for years, why do we have so many homeless Sheffielders?</p> <p><u>Response from Councillor Paul Wood (Executive Member for Housing, Roads and Waste Management)</u></p> <p><i>Dear Ms Shepherd</i></p> <p><i>Thank you for the question that you asked at December's Council Meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Sheffield, along with other cities in the UK, is facing significant issues around homelessness and rough sleeping, exacerbated by the unique challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, Sheffield has wide-ranging support, advice and accommodation options for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The first thing we will always do is try to prevent homelessness occurring or help people with a planned move to a new home.</i></p> <p><i>Homelessness is a complex issue, with multiple factors often impacting the lives of those who find themselves in difficult situations and Sheffield has various different pathways to accommodation, including access to available Council, Housing Association and Private Rented housing and supported housing including hostels. There is a shortage of affordable housing both nationally and locally and the Council has a Stock Increase Programme underway to help address this</i></p>	Councillor Alison Teal

	<p><i>shortfall. We do also consider if there are any suitable empty buildings that can be used for housing and, when this is appropriate, we will look at either using our own buildings or consider purchasing or renting them. We have recently bought back into use a number of our own properties for this purpose and have other plans being developed. To be fit to live in, all properties that we place homeless households in must meet the standards for residential accommodation to make sure people are living in safe and suitable homes, and not all empty buildings meet these standards, including former commercial buildings. We actively investigate any empty housing to both make sure buildings are kept in good repair and to see if they could be made available to people in housing need.</i></p> <p><i>For those rough sleeping, as well as the long-term options described above, Sheffield City Council's Rough Sleeper Initiative work alongside the Framework Street Outreach Team. Framework complete a 6am outreach every morning, 365 days a year, to identify rough sleeping and provide advice, support and assist into accommodation.</i></p> <p><i>If you see someone sleeping rough in Sheffield and are concerned, you can report it either <u>online</u> via Streetlink, or by calling <u>Sheffield's Street Outreach Team</u> on 0800 066 5358 which is free from landlines and mobiles. You can also text SOTS to 80800, followed by your message. During evenings and weekends our out of hours Housing Solutions service is on 0800 7311 689.</i></p> <p><i>Members of the public can report empty residential properties to us via:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• 0114 2734680</i> <i>• phs@sheffield.gov.uk</i> <i>• Via the webform on <u>Empty properties</u> (sheffield.gov.uk)</i> <p><i>Kindest regards,</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Paul Wood</i></p>	
<p>Patricia Davey</p>	<p>My Lord Mayor I understand that on the 11th November of this year a plaque was unveiled in our Council Chamber to mark the very historic occasion of the first members of this City receiving the King's Shilling thus leading to the formation our own brave and famous Sheffield City Battalion. My Lord Mayor I would</p>	<p>Lord Mayor Gail Smith</p>

respectfully ask if you are able to give us information as to what lead up to this Plaque being installed in the Council Chamber and also some information regarding why the Sheffield City Battalion was formed and their history.

Response from Councillor Terry Fox (Leader of Sheffield City Council)

Dear Pat,

Thank for your questions, to the Full Council meeting in December 2021.

I apologise for not being able to respond to you in person at the time and for the delay in writing to you. I hope this written answer provides you with everything you would like to know.

In November 2018 Labour Councillors proposed a Notice of Motion which called for a permanent memorial to the Sheffield Pals, and all of the 31st Division, and that it would be a fitting tribute for this memorial to be housed in the Town Hall's Council Chamber. I have attached a copy of the Notice of Motion – which I proposed – for your interest.

Due to Covid pandemic it was not possible to have the memorial installed for last years' remembrance but, with the easing of restrictions this winter, the council was now able to honour this commitment.

On Armistice Day, the plaque was unveiled in the Council Chambers in dedication to Sheffield Pals who served in the Sheffield City Battalion during the First World War. The Pals Battalions formed in the autumn of 1914 following a recruiting drive by the War Office. Thousands of men rushed to the recruiting offices to join up as enthusiastic volunteers to help with the war effort. In Yorkshire alone within a matter of days several battalions had been formed at their maximum strength of 800-900 men each.

These battalions were attached to existing regiments and given a new battalion number followed by the word 'Service'. 6 This battalion became known as the Sheffield City battalion because it was recruited from Sheffield and was chiefly made up of men from the city. Recruitment took place in September at Sheffield's

Town Hall and about 1,000 men signed up within two days.

At that time the encouragement to join up as part of the recruiting campaign played on the idea that men from similar working trades and professions, and sports or social clubs should enlist together. The tragic consequences of this idea would be played out when these men went into action to fight together. Most of the Pals Battalions spent up to 18 months in training before arriving in northern France in the spring of 1916 where they began to prepare to take part in the Battle of the Somme. This was to be a large-scale attack to be launched by the British Army on a 15-mile front against the German Army's well-fortified positions. Most of the Pals Battalions in 31st Division went into action from this part of the British Front Line on the morning of 1st July 1916.

Historical records – such as first-hand diary entries – indicate they were well trained and that moral was good, but they were inexperienced in battle.

Their division was in position at the far northern end of the 15 mile front of the attack. The task of 31st Division was to advance east through the German Front line and capture the fortified village of Serre, several hundred yards ahead of the British Front Line. Once beyond the village the division was to pivot at a 90 degree angle to face north, whilst keeping touch with its neighbour, the British 48th Division, on its left. This was apparently a difficult manoeuvre to make even if the men were not under fire.

The casualties of the Pals Battalions who went into action on 1st July were very heavy. Most of these battalions went into the attack at a strength of about 600-700 men. Some men had been left behind in the rear area from each battalion. Many of the Sheffield Pals were killed in the very first day of fighting.

By the end of the four-month long battle, 90% of the Sheffield Pals had been killed. Those who did survive they will have undoubtedly had to carry mental and physical scars.

Since the group signed up in the Council Chamber it seemed only fitting their plaque was placed in the same room.

	<p><i>I had the honour of being present at the unveiling of the plaque in Town Hall, alongside the Lord Mayor and Colonel Norton. After this we walked together up to the Cenotaph to attend the Armistice Day service and laid wreaths.</i></p> <p><i>Thank you again for your question and I hope my answer covers everything you required.</i></p> <p><i>Yours sincerely,</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Terry Fox</i></p>	
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