

Finance Committee

Meeting held 18 March 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Zahira Naz (Chair), Mike Levery (Deputy Chair), Bryan Lodge (Group Spokesperson), Toby Mallinson (Group Spokesperson), Glynis Chapman, Marieanne Elliot, Mary Lea, Shaffaq Mohammed and Ibbby Ullah

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies for absence were received.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 February 2024 were approved as a correct record.

4.2 The Chair agreed to follow up the outstanding response to the Member's supplementary question.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 A petition had been received from Georgia Milne which had received 12 signatures:

"Save Land at Rock Street and Neville Drive as Community Green Space

We the undersigned petition the council to withdraw the sale of the green space at Rock Street and Neville Drive (S3 9JB) to instead preserve it for use as a community green space. Recognising the critical shortage of council-run allotments and community green spaces in the local Burngreave and Kelham neighbourhoods, we urge the council to reconsider the sale of this land for private development. Instead, we propose that the space be repurposed for the benefit of the community, either as social housing or as a dedicated green area accessible to all residents. We therefore request the council to: - Reevaluate the decision to sell council-owned green spaces, particularly the 2 acres at Rock Street and Neville Drive (S3 9JB). -Consider alternative uses for the land that prioritise the well-being and recreational needs of the local community, such as community gardens, allotments, public parks, or social housing. -Engage in open dialogue with local residents to gather input on the future use of this green space.

We are greatly concerned by Sheffield Council's recent decision to put up five council-owned green spaces for private sale, including 2 acres of land at Rock Street and Neville Drive (S3 9JB). In light of the limited access to community green spaces in the Burngreave and Kelham areas, we believe that preserving this land as a community green space is crucial for the well-being and recreational needs of local residents.

The local areas of Burngreave and Kelham are underserved in their access to community green spaces, such as council-run gardens or allotments. If the council's suggestion that 24 privately owned dwellings be built on the land is carried out, this will not only remove a large area of green space from the existing community but also increase the local demand for accessible green spaces.

It is well-known that once publicly owned land is sold, the chances of it being returned to public ownership are slim. Therefore, we strongly advocate for a comprehensive plan to retain public ownership of this green space, ensuring its continued use for the greater good of the local community.”

There was no speaker to this petition therefore a written response would be provided.

5.2 Zak Viney attend the meeting and asked the following question:

On the 7th February, I attended Full Council - asking Sheffield City Council to consider more ethical policies related to outdoor advertising.

Cllr Ben Miskell, Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee, recommended I attend today's meeting of the Finance committee, where the council's new advertising and sponsorship policy is to be discussed. Cllr Miskell said Sheffield would look to draw on best practice from around the country and take an ethical approach to products and services. So it will be great to see the council joining the likes of Cambridgeshire County, Somerset and Coventry City Councils who have adopted strong policies against harmful advertising.

I'm excited to attend this meeting today to share my proposals with the council, which have been advised by experts in this matter, the campaign Ad Free Cities - whom themselves this month released a startling report, showing the majority of advertisements in England & Wales were placed in poorer areas. Notably in Sheffield, 60% of adverts were placed in the poorest 3 deciles, with only 2% in its most affluent third.

As I mentioned on February 7th, these adverts thrive on insecurities, debt and unhappiness - promoting consumerism in an age of climate breakdown and economic inequality. Sheffield Green Party has asked the council to consider a policy which does not support high carbon industries and products harmful to people and nature. As a representative of the Sheffield climate and social justice movement, I'd support this approach, with such a policy seeking to regulate adverts for products such as junk food, alcohol, gambling, SUVs and all polluting

cars, fossil fuel financiers, airlines, airports and destinations that necessitate air travel.

A note that advertising of these products undermines the council's own policies related to Clean Air, health and wellbeing. The council could also consider, if for profit advertising must be used, to prioritise promotion of local Sheffield businesses, as opposed to multinational corporations that overwhelmingly pollute our public realm with their advertisements. Evidence from a ban on junk food advertising across the TFL network in London shows that the ban has not led to any drop in revenue for the authority, and once more it has prevented 100,000 cases of obesity as well as thousands of cases of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and could save the NHS more than £200 million.

A proactive measure from the Finance committee could help us create a happier, healthier Sheffield, freed from the pressures of harmful advertising. Taking action on this issue can discourage mass consumerism, an attitude which is driving climate and ecological breakdown, as well as harming wellbeing and local resilience.

While a policy to restrict harmful advertising will be a great step forwards, many sites that are not under the council's control will still not be affected. Given the harms caused, the deliberately intrusive nature of digital advertising, and the relationship between outdoor advertising and inequalities as I mentioned earlier, I would very much like to see Sheffield ban and remove such advertising altogether.

The Chair responded with the following answer:

The Council does not have powers to ban and remove advertising out of its control, but we are going to do everything we can for advertising that is within our control.

The display of advertisements is subject to a separate consent process within the planning system. This is principally set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#).

Advertisements are controlled with reference to their effect on amenity and public safety.

The Council is involved in decisions about advertising sites where an application requires the express consent of the local planning authority. When making decisions the local planning authority is limited in its powers, with decisions being based on set conditions which are detailed in the Regulations at Schedule 2, as shown below...

All advertisements, whether they require consent or not, are subject to the standard conditions in [Schedule 2 to the Regulations](#). These are:

1. no advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site on which they are displayed (this includes the highway

- authority, if the sign is to be placed on highway land);
2. no advertisement is to be displayed which would obscure, or hinder the interpretation of, official road, rail, waterway or aircraft signs, or otherwise make hazardous the use of these types of transport;
3. any advertisement must be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site;
4. any advertisement hoarding or structure is to be kept in a condition which does not endanger the public; and
5. if an advertisement is required to be removed, the site must be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

Decisions must be assessed on this basis. However, as per number 1 of these conditions, permission must be sought from the landowner. Where the Council is the landowner, it can refuse permission for an advertisement to be displayed.

Local planning decisions can be appealed with the Planning Inspectorate, which deals with planning appeals, national infrastructure planning applications, examinations of local plans and other planning-related and specialist casework in England.

The proposed Advertising and Sponsorship Policy for Sheffield is one of the most ambitious policies in the country. It recognises the impact of influential advertising within our communities and that advertisements are sometimes targeted towards our most vulnerable, those on low-income and areas of high deprivation. The policy goes further than national legislation to align with the Council's plan, values and commitments.

The Council is working hard to support health and environmental improvements, and it is important that action is taken where possible to minimise exposure to products to get a better outcome from our people and planet.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- 6.1 There were no questions from Members of the Committee.

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 was 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.

7.2 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Finance Committee:-

1. approves the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1;

2. gives 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; and
3. notes any referrals from Council (petition and resolutions) detailed in Section 2 of the report and agrees the proposed responses

8. 2023/24 QUARTER 3 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

8.1 The Head of Accounting presented a report that brought the Committee up to date with the Council's outturn position for 2023/24 including the General Fund Revenue Position, Housing Revenue Account, and Capital Programme Monitoring (Appendix 1). The report also provided an update of the Council's Treasury Management activity (Appendix 2) and the Collection Fund Account (Appendix 3).

8.2 Officers agreed to provide further information on the initial forecasted budget for external residential placements.

8.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Finance Committee:

1. notes the updated information and management actions on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn as described in this report;
2. notes the updated information and management actions provided by this report on the Q3 2023/24 Capital Programme Monitoring as described in Appendix 1;
3. notes the Treasury Management report for Q3 2023/24 as described in Appendix 2; and
4. notes the Collection Fund monitoring report for Q3 2023/24 as described in Appendix 3.

8.4 Reasons for Decision

8.4.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

8.5 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

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

9. CAPITAL APPROVALS MONTH 10 (2023/24)

9.1 The Finance Manager submitted a report that provided details of proposed changes to the existing Capital Programme as brought forward in Month 10 2023/24.

9.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Finance Committee:

1. approves the proposed additions and variations to the Capital Programme listed in Appendix 1;
2. approves the issuing of grant funding as identified in Appendix 2; and
3. approves the acceptance of grant funding as identified at Appendix 3 (noting that there are both capital and revenue elements to the Species Survival Grant).

9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

9.3.1 The proposed changes to the Capital programme will improve the services to the people of Sheffield.

9.3.2 To formally record changes to the Capital Programme and gain Member approval for changes in line with Financial Regulations and to reset the capital programme in line with latest information.

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

9.4.1 A number of alternative courses of action are considered as part of the process undertaken by Officers before decisions are recommended to Members. 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.

10. ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP POLICY

10.1 The Advertising and Sponsorship Officer submitted a report that presented the draft Advertising and Sponsorship Policy for approval. If adopted the policy would govern how all advertising and sponsorship matters are managed across the Council.

10.2 Officers agreed to provide further information on whether the Local Plan could include a policy relating to the positioning of advertising boards.

10.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Finance Committee approves the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy attached to this report at Appendix 1 for Council-wide implementation regarding all advertising and sponsorship matters with effect from 1st April 2024.

10.4 **Reasons for Decision**

- 10.4.1 The draft Advertising and Sponsorship Policy will ensure that the Council acts consistently and fairly in managing Advertising and Sponsorship outputs/relationships, with restrictions as proposed.
- 10.4.2 Mitigations have been considered in terms of financial and commercial impact and to allow a managed transition across sectors that will be affected by the terms of the policy, including support for local businesses, and managing third-party agreements.
- 10.4.3 The long-term predicted savings and impact present benefits across health and environmental related issues.
- 10.4.4 The restrictions included in the policy reflect the commitments in the Council Plan, the values of the authority and the priorities that the Council is working towards.

10.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 10.5.1 Bring in a policy with fewer restrictions – the Council could adopt a policy that provides the framework for all advertising and sponsorship outputs but does not voluntarily adopt restrictions that go any further than national legislation. This could however leave the Council in a position of entering into agreements with organisations that do not align to our values, and promoting products and services that are counter-productive to Council priorities, having a negative impact on people’s health, lives and our environment.
- 10.5.2 Do nothing – the Council could continue to manage advertising and sponsorship outputs and relationships on an adhoc basis. This could however leave the Council in a position of entering into agreements with organisations that do not align to our values, and promoting products and services that are counter-productive to Council priorities, having a negative impact on people’s health, lives and our environment. It could also result in an inconsistent and unfair approach to decision making.

11. **CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION: PART 4 – FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES (FINANCIAL REGULATIONS)**

- 11.1 The Director of Finance and Commercial Services presented a report setting out the proposed changes to the Council’s Constitution: Part 4 – Financial Procedure Rules (Financial Regulations) arising from an annual refresh of the Regulations following consultation with Finance colleagues.
- 11.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Finance Committee:-
 - 1. endorses the proposed changes to the Constitution: Part 4 – Financial Procedure Rules (Financial Regulations), as outlined in the report and Appendix 1 and shown in full at Appendix 2; and

2. notes that the revised Financial Procedure Rules (Financial Regulations), together with other proposed changes to the Constitution, will be presented to Full Council for approval at the Annual Meeting on 15th May 2024.

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 11.3.1 The reasons for the recommended changes are set out in the Summary of Changes document at Appendix 1.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 11.4.1 Do nothing – this option was rejected because it would result in the Financial Procedure Rules (Financial Regulations), and therefore the Constitution being out of date with respect to current practices, policies and procedures.