

Agenda Item 4

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee

Meeting held 30 September 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Kurtis Crossland (Chair), Laura Moynahan (Deputy Chair), Marieanne Elliot (Group Spokesperson), Alan Hooper, Karen McGowan, Nabeela Mowlana, Robert Reiss and Mark Whittaker

Welcome and Introductions

Councillor Karen McGowan paid tribute to Councillor Paul Wood who had recently passed away. Councillor Wood had been a member of this Committee and, as ward councillor, represented both Woodhouse and Richmond. Councillor McGowan added that Councillor Wood always did his best for the people and the city and would be greatly missed. The Chair asked those present to stand and observe a silence in Councillor Wood's memory.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3.1 No apologies for absence were received.

4. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

5.1 During consideration of agenda item 12 (Grant to Voluntary Action Sheffield to Develop and Evaluate Support Systems for Frontline Voluntary and Community Sector Staff) (item 14 of these Minutes), Councillor Nabeela Mowlana declared a disclosable pecuniary interest on the grounds that she is employed by an organisation who may be in receipt of funding through Voluntary Action Sheffield.

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

6.1 The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 11 March and 15 May 2024 were approved as a correct record.

7. PUBLIC PETITIONS, QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

7.1 Saghir Hussain attended the meeting and asked the following questions:

1. "Why has the council not taken decisive action when the flooding of graves is a serious environmental and public health concern? What are the legal and ethical justifications for delaying immediate repairs, and how will the council address this failure to act?"
2. Why is Sheffield City Council profiteering from Muslim Burials?

Sheffield City Council's Bereavement Services pricing structure, effective April 2024, shows that for a Muslim burial, the total cost amounts to £3,985. This includes:

- Interment and exclusive rights for 50 years: £1,135
- Digging fee: £1,430
- Provision of concrete liners: £1,050
- Additional digging costs for liners: £370

While we understand the interment fee of £1,135, the remaining charges of £2,850 (digging, liners, and additional costs) are unjustifiably high. The same tasks, with drainage, should cost no more than £800. This reveals that Sheffield City Council is profiting over £2,000 per burial chamber.

Why is the Council exploiting grieving families during one of the most vulnerable times in their lives? This profiteering is unacceptable.

We demand a formal apology from Sheffield City Council and a full refund of the excess £2,000 per chamber. We ask the Committee to provide clear guidance to the Muslim community on when and how this refund will be issued, and what steps need to be taken to claim it."

The Chair advised that a written response would be provided after the meeting and published on the Council's website.

8. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

8.1 No questions from Members of the Committee had been received.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

9.1 The Principal Democratic Services Officer submitted a report containing the Committee's Work Programme which detailed all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee to enable the Committee, other Committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee.

9.2 In response to Members' questions, officers advised that two items (Public Space Protection Order and Leisure Service) would be added to the work programme for the December meeting of the Committee. Officers also agreed to provide knowledge briefings on the Community Infrastructure Levy (how the funding from the levy would be shared in the future) and reviewing Community Action Groups.

9.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:-

1. agrees the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1, including the additions and amendments identified in Paragraph 4 of the report and any agreed by members at the meeting; and

2. that the referrals from Council and Committees (petition and resolutions) detailed in Paragraph 2 of the report be noted and the proposed responses set out be agreed.

10. COMMUNITIES, PARKS AND LEISURE POLICY COMMITTEE FORWARD AGENDA FOR 2024/25

10.1 The Director of Parks, Leisure and Libraries and the Interim Director of Communities presented a report that outlined the forward agenda for the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee for 2024/25, setting out the key steps the Committee needed to take to build on the progress made last year and to deliver the Council Plan. The report explained the need to prioritise resources on the Council Plan outcomes and become a community and customer focused organisation to deliver high quality services for the people of Sheffield and address the financial pressure facing the Council.

10.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:-

1. notes the progress made in 2023/24, recognising the work of Elected Members, officers and partners to deliver against our objectives and support strong strategic foundations for the organisation;
2. considers the key issues identified in section 3 of the report as part of our forward agenda for 2024/25; and
3. agrees to work across Policy Committees to ensure the opportunities and issues identified in section 3 are taken forward as part of the Council Plan in 2024/25.

10.3 Reasons for Decision

10.3.1 The recommendations support the continued strategic development of the organisation and will enable the delivery of our Council Plan by agreeing the key issues that this Committee needs to address in the 2024/25 year

10.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

10.4.1 Alternative Option 1:

Do nothing

Not set out a forward agenda for 2024/25 – this was rejected because having agreed a new Council Plan, this committee needs to set out for citizens the things we want to achieve in 2024/25.

11. 2023/24 FINAL OUTTURN BUDGET POSITION

11.1 The Assistant Director of Finance and Accounting presented a report that set out the Council's final outturn position for 2023/24.

11.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee notes the updated information and management actions on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn as described in this report.

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

11.3.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 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.

12. 2024/25 QUARTER 1 BUDGET MONITORING

12.1 The Assistant Director of Finance and Accounting presented a report that brought the Committee up to date with the Council's revenue outturn position for 2024/25.

12.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee notes the updated information on the 2024/25 Revenue Budget Outturn as described in this report including the detailed committee budget monitoring information and management actions provided.

12.3 **Reasons for Decision**

12.3.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget.

12.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

12.4.1 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.

13. CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR IMPACT AND LEGACY OF THE SHEFFIELD NORTHEAST NEIGHBOURHOOD WORK

13.1 The Acting Public Health Consultant, Assistant Director of Public Health and representatives from Voluntary Action Sheffield and Sheffield Integrated Care Board presented a report that detailed the work undertaken as part of the Sheffield Northeast Model Neighbourhood (NEN), a five-year community development approach creating health and wellbeing across communities and addressing health inequalities.

13.2 Members highlighted the importance of ensuring that all directorates participate in delivering the workstreams as part of the NEN and asked whether this piece of work could be used as a model by other council services. Officers agreed to have a discussion at a knowledge briefing on how to ensure the learning from this work was shared across directorates.

13.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy

Committee:-

1. approves the commissioning of a contract with a value of up to £430,000 for Workstream 1 and 2, to:
 - design and deliver a collaborative leadership development programme,
 - facilitate wider organisational culture change within public services and the VCS towards greater collaborative working;
2. approves a grant award of up to £178,000 for Workstream 3 to Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS) to:
 - support building capability of up to 25 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations that have the potential to mature into community anchors; and
3. approves up to £180,000 for remuneration to enable up to 100 VCS leaders to participate in the collaborative leadership development programme.

13.4 Reasons for Decision

- 13.4.1 By approving this 24-month programme of work, the Council will promote the conditions for the Northeast Model Neighbourhood work to have the greatest impact and lasting legacy across Sheffield. This programme of work actively supports the delivery of Council Plan priorities and City Goals, by developing collaborative leadership and organisational cultures, and investing in the development of community anchor organisations.

13.5 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

13.5.1 Alternative Option 1

Do nothing - this would mean not delivering any of the proposed programme of work.

This option was rejected as the NEN work may not have the maximum impact in the four neighbourhoods or lasting legacy across the City into the future. It was also rejected as the programme of work has been screened and scored and deemed a suitable use of £800k of Public Health Grant reserves funding.

13.5.2 Alternative Option 2

Do some, but not all of the workstreams - this option would involve delivering one or more of the workstreams, but not all three.

This option was rejected as all three workstreams are interlinked and are key if we want to see the greatest possible impact and lasting legacy of the NEN work. It was also rejected as the programme of work has been screened and scored and deemed a suitable use of £800k of Public Health Grant reserves funding

14. GRANT TO VOLUNTARY ACTION SHEFFIELD TO DEVELOP AND

EVALUATE SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR FRONTLINE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR STAFF

- 14.1 Councillor Nabeela Mowlana declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Minute No. 14 (Grant to Voluntary Action Sheffield to Develop and Evaluate Support Systems for Frontline Voluntary and Community Sector Staff) on the grounds that she is employed by an organisation who may be in receipt of funding through Voluntary Action Sheffield. Councillor Mowlana left the room for the duration of the item.
- 14.2 The Health Improvement Principal and Assistant Director of Public Health presented a report that sought approval for a grant to Voluntary Action Sheffield to support their proposal to develop and evaluate culturally appropriate and inclusive support systems for frontline voluntary and community sector staff.
- 14.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee approves a grant of up to £94,564 to Voluntary Action Sheffield for work to develop and evaluate support systems for frontline voluntary and community sector workers.
- 14.4 **Reasons for Decision**
- 14.4.1 VAS has strong relationships with a wide range of VCS organisations and groups across the city and has provided leadership and support for the sector in Sheffield for over 90 years.
- 14.4.2 Given VAS's role and relationships, the pressing need to improve support systems for frontline VCS staff and the learning from their work to date in testing clinical supervision, VAS is best placed to take forward this proposal.
- 14.4.3 As well as benefiting the participating organisations, the findings from this work and its evaluation will be shared with both the wider VCS in the city and the wider health and care system across Sheffield and South Yorkshire. This will seek to influence thinking and practice on how best to support frontline staff across a range of organisations and sectors, in particular with regard to providing culturally appropriate and inclusive support.
- 14.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**
- 14.5.1 Alternative option 1:

Do nothing.

Due to the time constraints for submitting proposals for Public Health Grant Reserves funding, it was not felt possible to consider other options for taking forward work of this nature. The alternative would therefore have been to not submit a proposal for Public Health Grant Reserves and do nothing.

However, given the pressing need to improve support systems for frontline VCS staff in the city, and the risks of not taking action for their mental health and

wellbeing, and the wellbeing of the workforce as a whole, the option of doing nothing was rejected.

15. UPDATE ON SHEFFIELD'S GREEN & OPEN SPACES STRATEGY 2010 - 2030

15.1 The Head of Parks and Countryside presented a report that provided an update on the actions to date in achieving the objectives of Sheffield's Green and Open Spaces Strategy. The report detailed the work with partners in the city and set out an approach to reviewing and refreshing the strategy beyond 2030 when it would expire.

15.2 Members agreed that all Councillors should be invited to join the Task and Finish group and requested that the Committee be kept up to date on the number of Councillors who express an interest.

15.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:-

1. notes the contents of the report;
2. notes the progress made on the action plan within the Green and Open Spaces Strategy 2010 – 2030; and
3. approves the creation of a Task and Finish Group to consider the remaining years of the existing Green and Open Spaces Strategy, to be led by the Communities, Parks, and Leisure Committee and drawing from members of the Charity Trustee Sub Committee and Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee and other committees as appropriate, to consider planning for the final years of the existing strategy and considerations for any further iterations of the strategy post 2030.

15.4 Reasons for Decision

15.4.1 The Sheffield Green & Open Spaces Strategy 2010-2030 (GOSS) is a comprehensive plan aimed at enhancing and protecting the city's green spaces over two decades. It remains the key strategy setting out the goals and objectives for green spaces across the city and is the backdrop of decision-making and identifying priorities. With several years of the strategy remaining, it is prudent to consider the approach, engagement with the strategy, and progress against the existing strategy in determining what a new strategy beyond 2030 should look like

15.5 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

15.5.1 Alternative Option 1: Do nothing

The Green and Open Spaces Strategy 2010 – 2030 has 6 years left and there is an option to not carry out a review at this stage and not begin work on a new strategy beyond 2030. Doing nothing could mean that Sheffield falls short of the objectives set out in the strategy.

15.5.2 Alternative Option 2: Review and Refresh the strategy in 2030

The changes to the external environment set out in section 1 of this report, meant that Sheffield must review its strategic approach to managing its green (and blue) infrastructure and ensure that this key policy is fit for purpose both now and for 2030 and beyond. As this is a significant strategy, it requires early consideration. Delaying this work until 2030 could mean that Sheffield is left without a strategic response to the external environment and without an evidenced based strategic approach to managing, developing and protecting its blue and green infrastructure.

16. CREMATOR SERVICING CONTRACT APPROVAL

16.1 The Head of Bereavement and Coronial Services presented a report that sought approval for securing a cremator servicing and maintenance contract for the remaining lifespan of the cremators (up to 16 years) to secure best value and increase efficiency. No contract currently existed for the provision of this service and all work was procured as and when required.

16.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee approves the commissioning of a service and maintenance arrangement for the cremators situated at Hutcliffe Crematorium for the remainder of the cremator's active lifespan (contract for a maximum term of 16 years) and award that contract to IFZW.

16.3 **Reasons for Decision**

16.3.1 It is recommended that a contract for the servicing and maintenance of the cremators at Hutcliffe Wood Crematorium is awarded to IFZW for the remaining lifespan of the cremators. These are essential services which can only practically be provided by IFZW due to their specialist nature including an integrated electronic operating system. Offering a contract for these services secures best value and support the service in their role of running an efficient and professional crematorium service.

16.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

16.4.1 Alternative Option 1: Do nothing / continue as now

The service could continue to procure this activity in individual instalments as it has been doing since the cremators were installed in 2011. This option has been discounted as it is contradictory to procurement rules and regulations, particularly as the cremators age and require more frequent activity.

16.4.2 Alternative Option 2: Enter into a contract with a shorter duration

The service could enter a contract with a shorter duration which would not require committee approval. This is not the preferred option as it carries greater financial risk as the cremators age and wear. This options also requires the repetition of procurement activity at least 4 times during the cremators expected lifespan.