

# Agenda Item 6

## CITY OF SHEFFIELD

### METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

#### MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2024

#### COPIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THERETO

#### *Questions of Councillor Alexi Dimond to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Tom Hunt)*

**Q.1** In light of the International Criminal Court issuing arrest warrants for the Israeli Prime Minister and former defence secretary, will the Council write to Sir Keir Starmer to renew this Council's call for the government to stop arming Israel, and also to end its participation in the genocide of Palestinians?

**A.1** A copy of the motion passed by the City Council on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 was sent to the Government.

**Q.2** Did the Council previously regularly raise the Palestinian flag on the day of International Solidarity with the Palestinian people? If so, when did this practice end and why?

**A.2** We have no record of this taking place historically, although we are aware that some people in the city do recall it. We do not have any details of why it was stopped.

#### *Question of Councillor Qais Al-Ahdal to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Tom Hunt)*

**Q.** Will Sheffield Council raise the Palestine flag in line with International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in their resistance of illegal Israeli occupation?

**A.** The Palestinian flag was flown on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November to mark the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

**Question of Councillor Sophie Thornton to the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)**

It was disappointing to see no mention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the Chancellor's Budget Speech, and no commitment to extend vital funding for specialist services that is due to end in March 2025.

**Q. Have we had clarification on if this funding will be continued for next year?**

A. The Government's October Budget did reiterate the commitment to tackle violence against women and girls, referencing as an example the initiative to put domestic abuse specialists to work in police control rooms to better respond to incidents and victims.

We anticipate an announcement being made about the future of council funding related to tackling Domestic and Sexual abuse and violence against women and girls as part of the overall Government Financial Settlement for 2025-26. We expect to receive details of this later this month.

**Question of Councillor Steve Ayris to the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)**

**Q. Please could you provide the current anticipated timetable for completion of the Strategic Accommodation Review?**

A. The Accommodation Review will result in a financially sustainable estate which is well used, maintained to a good condition and meets the needs of the Council and our communities. This is a large and complex programme that will take time to complete in full. It requires a significant amount of enabling work, including developing supporting policies and data, to take place in the background to support its delivery.

The current anticipated timetable for the full completion of the Accommodation Review programme is December 2031, when the Future Workplace project implementation will finish. We expect the Community Buildings Review to take at least 5 years to complete. The current estimated completion date for building works at Central Library/Graves building is March 2028 and Town Hall is December 2030, subject to business cases being developed and agreed.

Since the onset of the programme significant progress has been made including:

- Consolidating our office space through the Moorfoot exit: 152 services have moved from Moorfoot to other Council buildings (Howden House, Town Hall, Central Library, Manor Lane, Solpro, Centre in the Park at Norfolk Park, Sharrow).
- Setting out a roadmap to a refurbished, restored and sustainable Town Hall which will be presented to Strategy & Resources Policy Committee in January 2025.
- Identifying a way forward for the Central Library & Graves Gallery Building and delivering initial surveys to support this.
- Agreeing an approach to a review of our community buildings, including the adoption of an interim policy. A pilot scheme is underway with positive involvement from the voluntary & community sector. This will inform the final policy.
- The development of a corporate landlord policy which will ultimately support better decision making about Council buildings for a consistent, effective and efficient approach.
- Significant data gathering to support evidence informed decision making and financial cost modelling.

**Question of Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to the Council's representative on the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (Councillor Tom Hunt)**

**Labour's £65m black hole in the South Yorkshire Police budget will put a considerable strain on front line services now and in the future.**

**Q. Will South Yorkshire Police have sufficient resources to enforce Labours new Respect orders?**

**A. Information provided by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority:**

Following the announcement of the inclusion of 'Respect Orders' in the upcoming Crime and Policing Bill both the Policing and Reform Directorate at SYMCA and South Yorkshire Police are looking to understand what new powers might be given to the police and how changes to existing legalisation will help in tackling antisocial behaviour involving vehicles, such as nuisance off-road bikes.

Once any Bill is enacted, South Yorkshire Police will ensure that their resourcing plans allow officers to use any new powers they are given.

**Questions of Councillor Ian Horner to the Council's representative on the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (Councillor Tom Hunt)**

**In November 2023 deep cuts were made to bus services. The North and the South East of the City were particularly badly affected by the reduction of services such as the 80 route. SYMCA was recently awarded almost £17m of Bus Service Improvement Plan funding by the Government.**

**Q.1 Will SYMCA now use this Funding to restore the Bus services cut by the Labour Mayor in 2023?**

**Information provided by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority:**

Bus services were cut in 2023 by the private operators who currently run the bus network in South Yorkshire. The Bus Service Improvement Plan award is insufficient to reinstate all services that were cut in 2023. We will prioritise the protection of existing services.

**Q.2 When Beighton Railway Station closed in 1954 the station yard became a motor vehicle scrapyards. The site is now empty. Is SYMCA looking to purchase the vacant land to safeguard its use for the proposed Tram Train service?**

A.2 Information provided by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority:

We have no plans or budget to purchase this land.

**Q.3 SYMCA will be following the Government line in relation to the hike in the bus fare cap. Are there any plans to increase the Tram fares, which are already higher than Bus fares for single journeys?**

A.3 Information provided by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority:

There is a paper being discussed at the 10 December MCA Board to consider bus and tram fares.

**Question of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Council's representative on the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (Councillor Tom Hunt)**

Residents are delighted to finally see a bus shelter on Arundel Gate at AG 24. However, I am concerned that the new bus shelter at AG 24 lacks real time information screens. There also seems to be the absence of solar panels unless they are very discrete which I was led to believe would also be installed.

**Q. Would you please provide an update for these as requests for this information has not yet been forthcoming.**

A. Information provided by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority:

The solar panel has been fitted already and should illuminate at dusk. Realtime information display will be fitted in the New Year.

**Question of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Charity Trustee Sub-Committee (Councillor Richard Williams)**

**Q. The council often has a conflict of interest when carrying out its role as a charity trustee because of its other roles such as managing parks. Will the council publish a clear policy on how it manages conflicts of interest?**

A. The Council has policies on avoiding conflicts of interest for both members and officers with its codes of conduct and these are published as part of the constitution, and these are relevant in matters relating to the Council's role as Charitable Trustee. However, your question also recognises that as well as individuals having conflicts of interest the Council as sole trustee may have a conflict with its other functions. That is well understood by the committee members and officers who advise it, including the Monitoring Officer and the legal team. They follow Charity Commission guidance to ensure that those conflicts are managed, and that information presented to the Council a trustee focuses on its interests. This might also include gaining the specific consent of the Charity Commission.

Many charities do have conflict of interest policies but they tend to address the same matters as our code of conduct policies, in that they address conflicts of individuals (in their case as trustees) but there may be some merit in the Council as trustee having some specific guidance or policy and I have asked the Director of Parks, Leisure and Libraries to liaise with the Monitoring Officer on this point.

**Questions of Councillor Martin Smith to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q.1 How many businesses applied to each of the first and second rounds of ReNew scheme, and how many received funding?**

A.1 Thank you for your question. I can confirm that in round one, no expressions of interest (EOI) were received, however 15 full applications were made which resulted in 4 awards.

In round two, 12 EOIs were received, which resulted in 4 full applications and 4 grant awards.

**Q.2 What was the original budget, and to date what has been the total cost of this scheme to the Council?**

The table below summarises the ReNew budget and the amount committed in Grant so far, which I trust will assist in answering your question.

A.2

<b>ReNew Budget Summary</b>	
Original ReNew Sheffield grant pot from Future Highstreet Fund	£300,000.00
Chapel Walk allocation from Future Highstreet Fund	£90,000.00
Sheffield BID contribution	£15,000.00
Total pot	£405,000.00
<b>Grant committed round 1</b>	<b>£149,482.48</b>
<b>Grant committed round 2</b>	<b>£140,000.00</b>
Applications pending appraisal/ approval	
Other fees to date (legal)	£3,042.50
To be added back to the pot (underspend from R1)	£1,717.16
<b>TOTAL FHSF Renew unallocated</b>	<b>£114,192.18</b>

**Q.3 How many businesses have relocated?**

A.3 Of the 8 grants that have been awards, there has been 2 new business start-ups, 3 relocations to the city centre and 3 expansions (additional premises).

I would also note that you and I are both members of the Regeneration and Development Board, where many of these matters are regularly discussed.

At these forums, which are not live-streamed, you have consistently spoken positively about the regeneration work in the city centre. I would therefore like to thank you for your cross-party and collegiate approach. Of course, I am happy to answer any further questions or discuss this matter further. Additionally, colleagues on the Transport, Regeneration, and Climate (TRC) Policy Committee stand ready to provide you and your committee with any assistance needed or joint working in the future.

**Q.4 Are there plans for further rounds of ReNew funding? If not, what funding opportunities are in place to support small businesses looking to relocate to the city centre?**

A.4 As detailed above there is an unallocated pot within the renew programme, although £90K of this is ringfenced for Chapel Walk (allocated from FHSF). It is likely that officers will recommend a Renew R3 focused on Chapel Walk, as we believe there will be interest once the extensive renovations that are currently being undertaken on a number of units there are completed.

However, having said all that it is important to note that the council's constitution is clear that such additional support beyond this particular fund would fall within the remit of the Economic Development and Skills (EDS) Policy Committee. As you will be aware, the ReNew funding was delivered as part of specific regeneration funding and was therefore limited in scope.

**Questions of Councillor Kurtis Crossland to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q.1 Can you please provide a breakdown of how much local CIL, strategic CIL and administrative fees for CIL have been collected per ward?**

A.1 Thank you for your question. Sheffield became a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) collecting authority on 15th July 2015 and up to Quarter 2 2024 had collected £31,4M of CIL monies. This can be used to fund both Strategic and Neighbourhood CIL projects, along with related administrative costs.

Only Neighbourhood CIL collection is reported by Ward, and I can provide you with this information following this meeting, if you wish.

How we allocate monies for both types of CIL – the national CIL legislation requires 15% of the CIL collected to be retained to support local communities (this becomes 25% in areas where there is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan). This is referred to in national CIL Guidance as the 'neighbourhood CIL'. With the exception of 10% set aside to support the development of Neighbourhood Plans, the Council has chosen to allocate all the remaining neighbourhood CIL not in a Neighbourhood Plan Area to



individual wards (this is calculated using Indices of Multiple Deprivation for areas without a Parish Council).

Our Local Area Committees co-ordinate how this is spent following consultation with their local communities, Ward members and agreement by the Chair of Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee and the Director of Communities.

Up to 5% of CIL receipts can be used by the collecting authority to cover administrative expenses.

The remaining amount is the main CIL 'pot' that is available for spending on the Council's priority strategic infrastructure projects. These projects are drawn from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that identifies key infrastructure needed to support the delivery of the Local Plan.

**Q.2 If a section of land has a specific allocation in the Local Plan, are there instances where it could be used for a different purpose?**

A.2 Once a Local Plan has been adopted, it is expected that decisions on planning applications will be taken in accordance with the development plan unless good reasons are put forward to justify a departure. So, land should be used for the purpose specified in the Plan.

It's also important to highlight that we hold a cross-party working group on the Local Plan every two weeks, with active involvement from your political group. As an administration, we've approached this process collaboratively, working collegiately to ensure the best outcomes for the city as a whole. This approach is entirely appropriate, given the strategic importance of the Local Plan for Sheffield's future.

**Questions of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**In July this year I asked a question related to Heart of the City new businesses in the city centre and 'Has any impact assessment on existing businesses which will now all have to compete for the same trade been carried out?'. He answered 'This is a commercial scheme where the Council has to operate in the open market. A formal impact assessment has not been carried out, but the strategy has been to seek to encourage new businesses into the city centre.'**

**Since then, there have been articles in the media indicating that established food and drink businesses have closed since the opening of the Cambridge Street Collective including in Kelham Island.**

**Q.1 What information does the council have on the affect the Cambridge Street Collective has had on existing hospitality venues since its opening and how much of this is cause and effect when all the businesses are competing for the same custom?**

A.1 The Council doesn't hold specific data on how the performance of one hospitality businesses effects another. We have access to footfall data and hotel occupancy data. The approach to the regeneration of the City Centre is to encourage more people to live, visit, and work in the City Centre and enjoy the increasing variety and choice of venues. This is about increasing the size of the market for all businesses not competing for a static market. Since Cambridge Street Collective opened, there have been no closures of other food halls and Cutlery Works, Sheffield Plate and Kommune continue to trade and to our knowledge do not have any vacancies in their kitchen spaces. New food and beverage establishments also continue to open

I'm always happy to answer questions about our transforming city centre and the success story it represents. That said, I'd like to remind you that, under the council's constitution, the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee (EDS) is responsible for overseeing economic policy and monitoring efforts to drive business and economic growth in the city.

To answer your question, I consulted with officers who support EDS, a committee of which you're a valued member. If you have further queries about economic matters, I'd encourage you to raise them directly through the appropriate committee channels, as this is the most effective way to ensure they're addressed thoroughly. As always, I'm happy to contribute in full council by providing additional detail whenever it's needed, particularly when it relates to our excellent regeneration projects and therefore thank you for your question.

**Q.2 Will the council now do an impact assessment on the effect on existing businesses to judge whether it should continue its policies which primarily attract new food and drink establishments into the city centre?**

A.2 The Council's approach to the regeneration of the City Centre is to grow and the number of people living, working and visiting the City Centre. In this way the overall size of the market will grow and provide more opportunities for all businesses in the City Centre to benefit.

**Q.3 Will the income to the council from the new food and drink businesses which have received financial incentives to open match the income lost by the closure of the established food and drink businesses, many of whom developed their businesses without similar financial help from the council?**

A.3 In answering your question, I want to emphasise that I am immensely proud of what we, as a city, are collectively achieving in transforming our city centre. I hope you share that pride as well, although I must say that the tone of your question does come across as rather negative, which I imagine is not your intention.

In direct response to your question, it is important to be clear that we do not offer financial incentives and any commercial deals agreed with food and drink establishments in the Heart of the City have been offered on market terms, in line with commercial practices standard across the sector for the letting of new business spaces. These incentives are common practice and are available for the letting of any space in the market.

The lettings process is overseen and agreed upon by a cross-party Councillor and Officer Group, which includes Cllr Martin Smith and Cllr Shaffaq Mohammed. Both have expressed their contentment with the general approach taken in various meetings and have been given ample opportunities to raise any concerns. Each letting deal comes to this board. Additionally, businesses and investments that were deemed not the best match for the Heart of the City have subsequently established themselves in other units within the City Centre, contributing to its overall vibrancy and economic activity.

**Question of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q. What consideration has there been of extending the ban on pavement parking to any area outside the city centre?**

A. Thank you for your question, and I appreciate your interest in this important issue. Parking and traffic enforcement are shared concerns across committees, and I'm pleased to share that we've been making meaningful progress through cross-party and cross-committee collaboration.

First, I want to reaffirm our city's commitment to Vision Zero, a shared goal with our partners to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on Sheffield's roads. Achieving this ambitious target requires strong collaboration across the council and with external stakeholders. That's why I'm pleased we've established a joint Task and Finish Group between the Transport, Regeneration, and Climate (TRC) Committee and the Waste and Street Scene (W&SS) Committee. This group will focus on addressing parking issues, traffic enforcement, and other priorities, with the ultimate aim of creating safer, more accessible streets for everyone.

The recent paper discussed at the TRC Committee outlined the scope of this group. It includes exploring ways to enhance the enforcement of traffic

restrictions and considering how surplus income from enforcement can be used to further the Council Plan's objectives. There are clear links to Vision Zero here, such as stricter enforcement of restrictions near junctions, crossing points, and schools to improve road safety. For example, we've already prioritised key sites for implementing camera enforcement of moving traffic restrictions under the new powers granted by the Traffic Management Act (Part 6), and there is potential to expand this further.

At the same time, I'm keen to address the issue of problematic pavement parking, which creates significant problems for pedestrians—especially those who are visually impaired, use wheelchairs or mobility aids, or are parents with pushchairs. However, I believe we must approach this issue in a measured way, working alongside communities to recognise the challenges posed by street layouts in some parts of the city. Pavement parking not only creates accessibility issues but also damages footways, leading to increased maintenance costs. This issue was also highlighted in our recent engagement work on barriers to walking, wheeling, and cycling, reported to the TRC Committee in October.

As you may know, the Council's powers to tackle pavement parking are limited. Outside London, only the police can enforce "unnecessary obstruction" on pavements, which they can address by issuing Fixed Penalty Notices or removing vehicles. Local authorities can promote Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to restrict parking on footways in specific locations, but this process is costly, time-consuming, and requires additional signage.

Recognising the scale of the problem, central government began a review in 2020 to explore more effective solutions. Options under consideration included enabling local authorities to enforce "unnecessary obstruction," simplifying the TRO process, or introducing a national prohibition on pavement parking. While this review has been delayed by successive governments, Sheffield has taken proactive steps by introducing a TRO to ban pavement parking in the city centre. Phases 1 and 2 of this schemes are complete, and Phase 3 is planned for 2025. The city centre was chosen as a starting point because it's a well-defined area with sufficient alternative parking and existing infrastructure for signage. However, due to the significant costs involved, this approach may not be practical for a citywide rollout.

That said, I'm encouraged that the current government has committed to providing an update on the consultation and bringing forward proposals to address problematic pavement parking. I trust this is something you will welcome. The timing of our Task and Finish Group couldn't be better, as it allows us to explore solutions in tandem with a government that is showing a willingness to tackle this challenging issue.

**Questions of Councillor Brian Holmshaw to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q.1 Is Active Travel England a statutory consultee for planning applications?**

A.1 Thank you for your question. I can confirm that Active Travel England (ATE) are consulted on applications comprising:

- 150 homes or more.
- 7,500 square metres or more of floorspace.
- A site area of five hectares or more.

**Q.2 Are Climate Change officers at SCC statutory consultees for planning applications?**

A.2 I can confirm that there is no statutory requirement to consult with Sheffield City Council Climate Change officers on planning applications. The formal comments of external consultees are made publicly available on the Planning Portal. Consultee comments received from internal Sheffield City Council departments are not published. This approach allows the Local Planning Authority to establish an overall position and is important because for example internal consultees will have competing views and priorities.

**Q.3 In Suffolk and in Darlington to name but two planning authorities, consultee comments provided by statutory consultees such as Highways, Environmental Protection Service, Environment Agency and National Highways England are published on the planning portal. The public can then see what consultees have to say about the planning application in question. This is not the case in Sheffield. Why not?**

A.3 As outlined above: Consultee comments received from internal Sheffield City Council departments are not published. This approach allows the Local Planning Authority to establish an overall position and is important because for example internal consultees will have competing views and priorities.

**Question of Councillor Nikki Belfield to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q. Sheffield city centre is transforming, and people can see it this year, as they enjoy the Christmas Festivities throughout the city. Can you give an overview of what's been achieved this year?**

A. Thank you for your question. Sheffield is undergoing an exciting period of transformation, with regeneration projects reshaping the city centre, turning it into a vibrant and exciting place to live, work and play and visit.

Over the past year we have:

- Secured more than £19m of funding for the regeneration of Parkwood to improve access, and site improvements and attract investment.
- Begun the renewal of the Cole Brothers building in partnership with Urban Splash with the vision to provide cafes, restaurants, shops, leisure facilities, cultural space and flexible workspace on the upper floors.
- Supported and worked in partnership to bring forward Harmony Works at Castlegate following the acquisition of the building through the "Gateway to Sheffield" project at Castlegate.
- Begun work on the creation of a new public park at Castlegate, including uncovering more archaeology and the deculverting of the River Sheaf.
- We have begun and almost complete the transformation of Fargate which will see this historical street transformed into a Fargate for the future, complete with new paving, lighting, seating, and 'Grey to Green' style planting.
- We have selected a contractor for the works to Event Central and work will begin in summer 2025 to turn this building into a mixed-use cultural community hub and compliment the new 'events space' at the top of Fargate, which features underground electrical infrastructure for events.
- Working in partnership through "Sheffield Together" we secured £67m of investment in two brand new residential neighbourhoods in Sheffield city centre providing 1,300 new homes at Furnace Hill and Neepsend. The process of selecting a development partner has now begun and will then move into delivery. This is the first step in delivering up to 20,000 new homes in the city centre delivering more homes that will provide much needed housing in new distinctive neighbourhoods and add vibrancy to our city centre.
- And in Heart of the City, we've now completed the majority of our buildings & spaces, bringing a large workforce into the city centre with HSBC, Henry Boot & CMS alongside flexible co-working space. This

creation of 1.5 million sq ft of individually designed & repurposed buildings, will generate 7,000 direct & indirect jobs for the city by 2030. This has been a huge year for Heart of the City, which has seen the Radisson Blu, Cambridge Street Collective food hall and Leah's Yard as new additions, BOX sports bar and with kitchen & Pret set to open their doors this month. This adds to Cream Store, Fjalraven, Yard Store, Marmadukes, Sostren Greene, Weekday, Monki, Savills Barbers, Bird and Blend, with more to come. It can now safely be called award winning with Heart of the City named both Outstanding Development of the Year and just last Outstanding Project of the Year at recent sub-regional and regional awards.

As you can see, it has been an incredible year for Sheffield City Centre, which is now transforming into a place that we can all be proud of.

**Question of Councillor Alison Norris to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**The circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. Library of Things have been introduced to help save money and reduce waste by affordably renting out useful things like drills, sound systems and sewing machines from local spaces. They are also often great places to learn skills like DIY and repair.**

**Q. Have you considered introducing a Library of Things in Sheffield to help tackle the Climate Emergency?**

A. Thank you for your question. I know from our conversations that you're a strong advocate for the circular economy and a regular user of Reyt Repair in Burngreave. I also appreciate your enthusiasm for seeing opportunities like this extended across the city, including in your own ward. I'm pleased to share that many of these issues will be explored further in the upcoming 'What We Eat, Buy, Use and Throw Away' decarbonisation route map. This will delve into the circular economy in Sheffield, drawing on lessons from fantastic initiatives like the Burngreave Tool Library, Reyt Repair, and other repair cafés operating across the city.

From discussions with colleagues around the country, including in London boroughs, it's clear there's growing interest in projects such as the Library of Things, which many councils are supporting or launching themselves. I'm keen for us to explore this idea further in Sheffield, with much of this work naturally falling under the remit of our colleagues in Waste and Street Scene (W&SS). It's an exciting opportunity to expand the circular economy here and build on the great work already happening locally in many of the projects that you have discussed with me.

**Question of Councillor David Barker to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q. I understand that the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee is creating an Access and Movement Strategy for the City Centre. Why is this important in terms of developing thriving streets and how will people be able to get involved and have their say?**

A. A reliable, affordable and sustainable transport network is key to a thriving, growing Sheffield. The Sheffield Transport Vision sets out the priorities for Sheffield city centre to be a place with great streets, designed for people not just vehicles; a place where you don't always need a car to get around; and for everyone in Sheffield to have reliable, sustainable transport options to access the city centre.

There is a significant body of evidence which demonstrates that businesses, residents, developers and visitors all benefit from investment in our streets and the public realm, helping to revive high streets and create liveable, vibrant communities. Research summarised in the 'Pedestrian Pound 2018' report suggests that well-planned improvements to public spaces can boost footfall and trading by up to 40%. There are numerous examples across the country, including Sheffield's own Heart of the City where an evaluation of improvements to the Peace Gardens reported a 35% increase in footfall in the City Centre (Genecon, 2010).

To support our ambitions to transform Sheffield city centre and continue evolving its transport network, we are starting work on a new City Centre Access and Movement Plan. This plan will outline how and where transport infrastructure needs to be improved to make it easier for people to get around, offering more choices and better meeting their needs.

As you know, we are aiming to build 20,000 new homes in the central area of the city, making it essential that we get this right. By planning carefully now, we can ensure that our city centre is prepared for the future, supporting a vibrant, accessible, and sustainable city centre for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

Our first conversation around this will be launched in early December and we want to bring together views on existing city centre transport issues, as well as hear from people about where we should prioritise future transport investment to help make the city centre a great place to live, work and visit.

Individuals, businesses, and organisations will be able to share their views in our online survey throughout December and January, and we will be holding a series of drop in events, workshops and focus groups to ensure that everyone can have their say. We will use this feedback to develop a full draft plan for consultation in summer 2022, which will be discussed further with colleagues on the Transport, Regeneration and Climate (TRC) policy committee. In the meantime, I know that you are doing great work in



Richmond and know that I will have your support in advertising the consultation with residents in your ward.

**Question of Councillor Ruth Milsom to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q. I understand that last week, members of your committee discussed a joint working group with Waste and Street Scene on parking. Can you please outline why this is necessary and what you hope that it will achieve? It would be good to have your reflections on how it links to Vision Zero, which is the council's commitment to eliminating all fatalities and serious injuries on Sheffield's roads.**

**A.** Thank you for your question and the interest that you have shown on this issue as part of your membership of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP), as well as the advocacy that you have carried out to see the reintroduction of Operation Park Safe or other similar methods to tackle dangerous parking.

Let me begin by reaffirming our city's commitment to Vision Zero—our shared goal with partners to eliminate all fatalities and serious injuries on Sheffield's roads. Achieving this ambitious target requires strong collaboration across the council and with our partners. I'm pleased to share that we're making progress on this through the establishment of a joint Task and Finish Group between my committee and Waste and Street Scene (W&SS), which will play a crucial role in driving this vital work forward.

As background, you'll be aware there are several areas of overlap and shared interest between the two committees, particularly around the enforcement of traffic restrictions. A recent paper discussed at the Transport, Regeneration, and Climate (TRC) Committee outlined the scope of the Task and Finish Group, including exploring ways to enhance the effectiveness of enforcing traffic restrictions and determining how surplus income from enforcement can be used to support the Council Plan's objectives.

Our Vision Zero approach, which is embedded in our Road Safety Action Plan, aims to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on our roads. While I don't want to pre-empt the outcomes of the Task and Finish Group's discussions, there are clear potential links to Vision Zero. For instance, stricter enforcement of restrictions at junctions, crossing points, or near schools could significantly improve road safety by making it safer for people to cross our roads. This focus on safety has already informed the prioritisation of initial sites for implementing camera enforcement of moving traffic restrictions under the new Traffic Management Act (Part 6) powers now available in Sheffield, and there is scope to expand this further.

While we must comply with legislation regarding how enforcement funding is spent, surplus income could be used to support additional road safety

schemes. It's fantastic that we have cross-party and cross-committee support to establish this Task and Finish Group, and I look forward to working with them to explore these issues and implement their findings to make our roads safer for everyone.

**Question of Councillor Mark Whittaker to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q. Two weeks ago, it was Road Safety Week. What did the council do to promote it?**

A. Thank you for your question about this very important issue, which I know is a big priority for you in your ward, including addressing concerns such as speeding to improve road safety.

As you may be aware, the council is a member of South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership – the partnership ran a week of campaign promotion which was amplified by partners, including the council.

Throughout South Yorkshire, several events were held during Road Safety Week to highlight the ongoing work by partners to reduce road casualties. I had the opportunity to attend a Young Driver workshop at King Egbert School, where students engaged with a session about important topics like insurance, electric cars, and theory tests and importantly, how to protect vulnerable road users. These workshops are part of a broader programme of interventions aimed at supporting 16-24-year-olds in the city. Additionally, Young Driver Coordinator John Furniss visited Astrea Academy and Dearne Valley College to engage with more young people on these critical road safety issues.

Safer Roads partners came together in Doncaster on Wednesday for an engagement event – featuring National Highways, South Yorkshire Police, South Yorkshire Fire.

On Friday 22 November, Sheffield Heeley MP Louise Haigh visited Mundella School council where they talked about travel to and from school, behaviour change ideas and what police / council / partners can do to discourage dangerous parking by parents. This event was also attended by South Yorkshire Mayor Oliver Coppard, Brake's campaign manager, police, fire colleagues, Ed Clancy – Active Travel Commissioner. The school was chosen by Karen Vickers from the council's road safety team as they are a very proactive school – in part due to their great work with our Modeshift Schools programme

Sheffield Star reported on the event on Friday 22 Nov at Mundella School:  
<https://www.thestar.co.uk/education/primary-school-pupils-grill-transport-secretary-and-south-yorkshire-mayor-on-road-safety-during-visit-4879870>

From Sunday 17 November to Saturday 23 November South Yorkshire Safer Roads social media channels were dedicated to Road Safety Week starting with the Day of Remembrance. News stories were issued on the partnership website through the week.

You can read the stories here: <https://sysrp.co.uk/news/mundella>

<https://sysrp.co.uk/news/doncasterhub>

<https://sysrp.co.uk/news/ecgberts>

I am pleased to say that during the week, social media content on SRP dedicated channels reached: 12,600 people on Facebook, 375 people on Instagram, 14,300 impressions on X (formally known as Twitter). In total, our Road Safety Week messages were seen more than 40,000 times by at least 27,275 people. Sheffield Council's media team (along with other partners) shared this content on council channels.

**Question of Councillor Laura McClean to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q. On 17th November, the Government announced a £1 billion government funding boost for bus services. What does this mean for Sheffield?**

A. Thank you for your question. The funding in question was announced by the Department for Transport (DfT) and is designated for local transport authorities to enhance bus services across England (excluding London) in 2025/26. I'm particularly pleased to see that this government has moved away from wasteful competitive funding processes towards a needs-based allocation system. This approach has significantly benefited our region, ensuring we receive the support necessary to improve vital transport services.

It splits as:

- £670 million to enable Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to deliver their bus service improvement plans (BSIPs);
- £285 million for the Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) to protect existing services and support service delivery; and
- £151 million to continue the National Bus Fare Cap at £3, beginning in January 2025 through to 31 December 2025, although we know that the average fare will be well below this amount.

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) has been allocated around £16.5M revenue of the £670M total for LTAs. SYMCA officers are currently working through what this means for bus services in 25/26 in the context of a network that has shrunk over the last decade. Information from SYMCA is that around 42% of bus miles have been lost on South Yorkshire over the last decade, with 24% of the remaining services supported by public funding. The key priority will therefore be to keep as many services as possible running through 25/26, including many supported school services. SYMCA and all the South Yorkshire authorities are, of course, currently consulting on bus franchising proposals to change the way that buses work across our region for the future. Therefore, safeguarding routes, ahead of franchising is vital to us and therefore needs to be a focus for this funding.

It is also worth noting that the continuation of the bus fare cap, but raised to £3 from the current £2, does not mean that £3 will be the new standard fare in Sheffield. Single fares are expected to increase above £2 but with the average price of a commercial single fare remaining below £3. For people that are travelling regularly the range of day, weekly and other period tickets including the multi-operator Travelmaster tickets may provide an even more affordable and flexible option.

With Christmas fast approaching, we're excited to announce the launch of our free festive travel offer this week! We're providing 6,000 free TravelMaster CityWide Sheffield 1-day tickets, giving people unlimited travel on buses and trams across the city for a whole day. This initiative makes it easier for everyone to get around and experience the best of what Sheffield has to offer during the festive season. It's also a great opportunity to explore the fantastic attractions and transformation that happening in our fabulous city centre.

**Question of Councillor Mia Drazaic to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q. Can you please provide an update to the archaeological work at Castlegate?**

A. Thank you for your question. All the findings from the most recent investigations can be viewed on Wessex Archaeology's YouTube channel, which I would encourage you to share on your own social media:

- <https://youtube.com/shorts/tXXAT1YgbAY?feature=share>

More information can also be found on both Wessex Archaeology's website and the Friends of Sheffield Castle's website. Again links can be provided:

[Sheffield Castle | Our Work | Wessex Archaeology](#)  
[Friends Of Sheffield Castle – the People's Castle!](#)

In summary, there have been previous archaeology on the site in the 1920s and more recently in 2018, but as part of our work to create a new public park, we have carried out the biggest excavation of Sheffield Castle to ever undertaken. This took place over a 12-week programme by Wessex Archaeology March and May 2024 which revealed:

- For the first time in 70 years, the remains of Castle's imposing medieval gatehouse, has been uncovered.
- A "burnt deposit" dating from the Norman/ late Saxon era was discovered.
- A post hole that radiocarbon dating indicates could be from the original wooden castle (motte & bailey).
- Some wooden stakes were also found, likely to have been used in the Civil War, which is the first time anyone has recovered any.
- A cementation furnace.

The time for the investigations was extended following the discovery of what was believed to be the foundation of Sheffield Castle walls. This took place over 4 weeks in summer 2024.

A further extension of the work for 10 weeks has been undertaken recently by Wessex Archaeology. This has taken about 10 weeks and was only completed in mid-November 2024. this uncovered:

- The surviving upper surface of the motte comprised of 15th & 16th century cobblestones.
- Some smaller sandstone walls probably corresponding with 18th C dwellings.
- Larger sandstone walls which scale suggest could be part of the Castle.
- A further cementation furnace.

As you can see, we are incredibly proud of the archeologically work that has been ongoing.

**Question of Councillor Gareth Slater to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

- Q. I see on social media that you recently met, alongside council officers, with Starship Robots. You said that last year alone, their automated delivery robots completed 7.1 million deliveries worldwide and are now expanding their operations, replacing millions of car journeys with quick, easy, and convenient robot deliveries. They have successfully launched in Leeds and Milton Keynes, what potential**

**does such innovation have when it comes to decarbonising final mile deliveries?**

A.1 Thank you for your question about this very interesting issue. You're right to say that I recently had a very interesting meeting with Starship Robots where they presented how their technology can provide an effective way of supporting short local deliveries of supermarket convenience items as an alternative to traditional van deliveries or short car-based trips.

Our Sheffield Transport Vision sets out our ambition for more sustainable deliveries in Sheffield including electric vans and cargo bikes to decarbonise the final mile of deliveries which is important given that the last mile is often the most energy-intensive part of the delivery chain due to frequent stops, short distances, and congestion. Decarbonising these deliveries significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to meeting climate targets. A move away from diesel- and petrol-powered delivery vehicles or from people using their cars for short trips also directly supports improvements in localised air quality thereby improving the health of people in Sheffield.

Improving our neighbourhoods to enable and encourage people to walk, wheel and cycle to local shops and services many of which are in our local district centres is also a priority for our Transport Vision. We are continuing to deliver significantly more 20mph speed limit areas and pedestrian crossings across the city to support this and we are developing our walking, wheeling and cycling plan which will set out how, working with local communities, we can further improve neighbourhoods in Sheffield.

Understanding how innovative uses of technology are being developed and used is essential for us to consider the opportunities they might provide for our city in meeting our ambitions to decarbonise transport and improve local air quality. Starship Robots have provided us with an overview of their successful trial schemes in Leeds and Milton Keynes and we will be exploring this further.

I'm hopeful that we can explore innovative solutions, like those offered by Starship Robots, to bring their benefits to Sheffield. These technologies could play a key role in helping us decarbonise last-mile deliveries while also tackling congestion and making our city's streets greener and safer for everyone.

**Question of Councillor Matthew Dwyer to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

Q. Earlier this year, new data showed the success of Sheffield's Clean Air Zone, with a 21% drop in pollution across the city. You also noted that whilst this was positive, we still have some way to go as a city to meet the World Health Organisation safe levels for air quality.

**Vehicle idling remains a problem in the city, what plans do you have to tackle it?**

A. Thank you for your question on this very important matter.

- Our annual average air quality monitoring data for 2023 (CAZ operational for 9 months) observed a pronounced reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> at all CAP monitoring locations compared to 2022. I am sure that you will join with me in celebrating this achievement, but we need to continue the hard work to further improve air quality in the city.
- In 2023 an average NO<sub>2</sub> reduction of 16% was observed across the CAZ area and a 27% reduction was observed within the bus-gate area on Arundel Gate, which was reported widely in the local and regional media.
- A 21% reduction was observed across the larger Sheffield City Council Local Authority area which includes rural and less densely populated trafficked areas where average NO<sub>2</sub> levels were already lower.

Up to 50 per cent of all Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) released into Sheffield's air is a result of road traffic, which demonstrates why we need to act on this issue.

Clean Air Zones (CAZs) across the UK and London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) encourage us all to rethink the wider health implications of the way we travel and, with road transport responsible for 80 per cent of roadside NO<sub>2</sub> pollution alone, we all have a responsibility to change. We are grateful to everyone who has made changes to help achieve cleaner air in our City and then up the support that has been made available.

As a council will continue to do all that we can to reduce air pollution locally, alongside national HM Government air quality improvement initiatives.

Focusing on the substantive points of your question, idling engine can produce up to twice as many exhaust emissions as an engine in motion, which demonstrates the need for action. As you will know, exhaust emissions contain a range of air pollutants such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter. These can affect the air quality of the surrounding environment and the air we breathe.

Achieving long-term behaviour change in respect to vehicle engine idling is a challenge. Newer vehicles have stop-start technology which helps, fully electric vehicles eliminate exhaust emission which is why transitioning to an electric public transport fleet is critical.

You will be pleased to know that we are working closely with bus operators and with the South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority (SYMCA), who are the regional transport authority, in order encourage upgrade to cleaner buses and to reduce idling times. In the medium to long term, we want to

see a transition of our bus fleet to electric vehicles and are working hard to make this a reality.

The Council is preparing educational material for schools, fleet operators and the wider public and on-street campaign targeting key routes where nitrogen dioxide levels at the roadside remain above legal limits is planned for later this month.

You'll be pleased to know that the council is actively addressing engine idling through civil enforcement. However, the current legislation does have limitations, as it permits idling in various circumstances—for example, when vehicles stop for two minutes or less, run air conditioning in hot weather, or use heaters in cold weather. There are also allowances for specific operational needs, such as ice cream vans needing to keep their products frozen or vehicles powering equipment that requires the engine to run. This highlights why a transition away from fossil fuels towards electric vehicles is so important. By moving to cleaner technologies, we can eliminate these issues and create a healthier environment for everyone.

If a driver refuses to turn off their engine when requested, a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can be issued. However, this falls under the responsibility of the Waste and Street Scene (W&SS) team, not my committee. That said, in most cases, I am told that drivers comply when asked, either by switching off their engines or moving their vehicles, which helps to address the issue effectively.

The Council applies a number of strategies to combat the issue:

- Anti-idling signage is used to support behaviour change and enforcement. Sheffield City Council has installed anti-idling signs outside all schools in Sheffield at other key locations such as some bus stops and taxi ranks. Civil Enforcement Officers patrol across the city and ask drivers (in line with the legislation) to turn engines off.
- Sheffield City Council introduced a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) on 27 February 2023 in line with a legal directive from government. The CAZ forms part of the local Clean Air Plan (CAP) for reducing nitrogen dioxide from road traffic. Another strand of the CAP was the introduction of the bus gate on Arundel Gate. No idling signs were installed along the northbound carriageway of Arundel Gate as part of this intervention.
- We are continuing to work with coach and bus operators to reinforce the need to reduce engine idling and to seek their support in asking drivers to shut-off engines when stopping for 2 minutes or more.

Sheffield City Council has previously run a campaign - Air Aware campaign - which focused on anti-idling to achieve better air quality by reducing pollution from road vehicles. This was funded by Government air quality grant funds.



It's also important to highlight the fantastic work being done in schools by the Modeshift STARS team. They carry out outreach activities with schools and pupils, helping them achieve Modeshift STARS accreditation. This includes raising awareness about the importance of reducing engine idling, which plays a key role in promoting healthier and more sustainable behaviours.

This effort is further supported by Civil Enforcement Officers, who conduct outreach work in schools to educate pupils about parking issues, including the impact of engine idling around school premises. This collaborative approach helps to raise awareness and promote responsible behaviour among the wider community.

**Question of Councillor Rob Bannister to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)**

**Q. With the bike hub opening in the city centre, what is Sheffield doing to promote cycling?**

A. Thank you for your question. It's a great time to provide an update about this, as there's so much happening right now to encourage healthy and sustainable travel choices. The council has been working hard to identify and tackle the barriers to cycling, such as building confidence, providing access to bikes, and creating safer, improved infrastructure to make cycling easier and more enjoyable for everyone.

You might already know that for over 20 years, the council has been offering Bikeability training in both primary and secondary schools across the city. These sessions play a vital role in encouraging healthy travel habits from a young age while helping young people build confidence in cycling.

Through the CycleBoost programme, we also offer adult cycle training, creating a clear pathway to support cyclists at every stage of their journey. Whether you're starting from scratch with our "Learn to Ride" sessions, building your skills with "Cycle Confidence" on quieter roads and cycle tracks, or progressing to "Road Confidence" for cycling on busier roads, there's something for everyone. Additionally, we've partnered with various organisations to set up women-only groups, making cycling even more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

You might also know that, for the past 15 years, we've been offering free one-month trials of standard pedal bikes and e-bikes to help people discover the benefits of cycling. Building on this, we now have a flexible e-bike lease scheme, allowing Sheffield residents to lease an e-bike for £75 per month. The lease includes a full maintenance and service package, and there's no fixed term—making it easy and hassle-free to give e-bikes a try!

We also run the Modeshift STARS scheme for schools—a national accreditation programme that supports schools in promoting active travel and road safety through various activities and interventions. Additionally, 16 schools in Sheffield are already benefiting from the School Streets programme, which encourages walking and cycling to school by reducing traffic around school gates and nearby areas. This programme is ongoing, with plans to expand to even more schools in the future!

We've historically provided grants to employers to improve cycle storage and other facilities at workplaces, making it easier for employees to cycle to work. Additionally, thanks to a successful bid to the Energy Saving Trust, we've been able to offer generous match-funded grants to help employers invest in e-cargo bikes, supporting more sustainable business operations.

You can see from the changes across Sheffield that we are making great strides in improving our active travel infrastructure, something I'm incredibly proud of. Through the TCF2a programme, university master planning, and developer contributions, we've already delivered 3km of improved active travel routes connecting the city centre with both the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam's Collegiate Campus. Looking ahead, the TCF2b programme will deliver over 10km of enhanced infrastructure, including major improvements at West Bar and Townhead Street. These two interventions, set to open imminently, will prioritise cycling and walking, making it even easier to choose active travel.

With support from various active travel funds, central government, and South Yorkshire's Mayor Oliver Coppard, we've introduced measures to filter several roads, creating safer and more enjoyable conditions for cycling. These improvements include key areas like the Sheaf Valley, Kelham Island, and Division Street, helping to make active travel a more accessible and attractive option for everyone.

We have improved the crossings of the ring road at Headford Street, Broomspring Lane, Leavygreave, and Netherthorpe Tram Stop. In addition to that, the Grey to Green scheme has delivered almost 1km of improved active travel infrastructure on the back of what is an urban drainage scheme. I am sure that you will agree that it also looks stunning!

I'm also pleased to share that, in partnership with Northern Rail, TransPennine Express, and SYMCA, we've contributed to the development of the Cycle Hub at Meadowhall. To complement this, we've improved the cycle route between Chapeltown and Meadowhall, making it easier and safer for cyclists to travel. Additionally, in partnership with Sustrans, we've made important modifications to barriers along off-road routes, ensuring better access for non-standard and adaptive bikes, so that cycling is more inclusive for everyone.

More recently, we've started a programme to provide secure cycle parking on residential streets, making it easier for people to store their bikes safely. We're also about to launch an online tool where residents can request new

secure cycle parking for their street, helping us expand this programme beyond its current locations in Crookes and Walkley. This is an exciting step towards supporting more people to choose cycling as part of their daily lives!

Through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and supported by South Yorkshire's Mayor Oliver Coppard, we are developing improved connections in the city centre and routes in and around the Northern General Hospital.

Through the Local and Neighbourhood Transport Complementary programme we have a budget to make minor interventions such as increasing cycle parking, creating cycle by passes, dropping kerbs at road closures for example.

As you may know, we are also moving forward with plans for the A61 Chesterfield Road corridor. These plans aim to improve bus transit times, make walking safer, and encourage more active travel options, including cycling. It's another step in our commitment to creating a more connected and sustainable city.

**Questions of Councillor Paul Turpin to the Chair of the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)**

**Q.1 Has there been a reduction in how much CO2 is produced at the waste incinerator since SCC declared a 2030 zero carbon target?**

A.1 In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4 (c) a written reply will be provided, wherever possible, within 10 working days of the Council meeting and circulated to all Council Members and published on the Council website.

**Q.2 Has there been an increase in recycling by Veolia in Sheffield since SCC declared a 2030 zero carbon target?**

A.2 In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4 (c) a written reply will be provided, wherever possible, within 10 working days of the Council meeting and circulated to all Council Members and published on the Council website.

**Q.3 When are local recycling facilities expected to reopen?**

A.3 In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4 (c) a written reply will be provided, wherever possible, within 10 working days of the Council meeting and circulated to all Council Members and published on the Council website.

**Q.4 Have you had any indication of higher than usual visits to A&E since Friday 22nd November due to slips and falls on icy pavements?**

A.4 We don't get data for A&E admissions for slips on icy pavements within the Highways Maintenance Division and WSS so unable to answer this. The only data we do gather is when any incidents result in a compensation claim which can take months to materialise.

**Questions of Councillor Rob Reiss to the Chair of the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)**

**Many of us will have seen the recent unveiling of Sheffield's gritter fleet, with local names such as Sleet McKee and Snow Root.**

**Q.1 How many entries were received from members of the public and from primary schools?**

A.1 The gritter naming competition was open to schools and the public who were asked to come up with names for the Streets Ahead fleet of gritters, but they had to have a winter theme as well as a link to Sheffield.

In the public competition, we had a great response with around 450 entries. For the schools, 14 of them had a visit from the gritter which appeared in their playground which gave the children to explore.

Out of those 14 schools, nine submitted multiple names and six names were chosen.

**Q.2 Has there been any participation from those who have had gritters named after them?**

A.2 All the people who had a gritter named after them, such as Jessica Ennis Hill, Richard Hawley, Pete McKee, Joe Root and John Burkhll were contacted ahead of the media launch. We received a favourable response from them all. As for other participation from them - watch this space!

**Q.3 How does this competition help to raise the profile of the gritting programme over the winter months?**

A.3 The competition gave us the opportunity to involve the Sheffield community and young people to raise awareness of the gritting/winter programme.

Naming the gritters now gives them a profile across the city and we will be using these names as part of an on-going social media/media campaign over the winter months to help increase the public's perception of the gritting team and what they do as well as building in a road safety message.

**Questions of Councillor Alexi Dimond to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Kurtis Crossland)**

**Q.1 What is the role of the Deputy LAC Chair?**

A.1 The Deputy Chair is there to cover for the Chair when they are unable to attend any meeting. Each LAC appoints a Deputy Chair for the year, and, in the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair will chair meetings of the LAC. They attend meetings with the LAC Chair, manager and team in LAC meetings, supporting with ideas on spend of LAC funds and direction of community priorities.

**Q.2 What responsibilities do Deputy LAC Chairs have?**

A.2 Specifically, to deputise for the Chair in meetings during their absence. Whilst LAC Chairs have a specific role profile, the Deputy Chair does not.

**Q.3 Why are Deputy LAC Chairs excluded from LAC Chair meetings, even if they wish to attend as non-voting members?**

A.3 The LAC Chairs group agreed the Terms of Reference including membership of the fortnightly meeting held of LAC Chairs and relevant officers. The Terms of Reference for the Group are reviewed annually. The membership of the Group, as set out in the current Terms of Reference, includes that Deputy Chairs are to act as substitutes for the LAC Chair, as necessary. The meeting is not a decision-making meeting and is more for information, to share best practice and develop the role of Local Area Committees. The decision to only have deputies attend as sub is to allow time for discussion of items on the agenda. It was felt that if deputies also attended it would disproportionately extend each item if they also wanted to comment and reflect as part of discussions. The intention is for Chairs to feedback discussions to the other members of their LAC.

**Questions of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Kurtis Crossland)**

I am aware of the flood risk at Ecclesfield Park and would appreciate an update from Communities, Parks and Leisure Committee on the following:

**Q.1 What progress has been made at Ecclesfield Park on improving facilities and natural solutions to alleviate flooding?**

A.1 An agreement has been reached on a natural solution to reduce the risk of flooding to residential properties adjacent to the park and an Outline Business Case aimed at securing £100,000 of funding allocated by the Environment Agency is well advanced.

**Q.2 What is the cause of delays in the programme?**

A.2 The main cause of delay was due to identifying a solution to the problem of flood risk which did not impact on the areas of the park occupied by sports pitches (because Sport England would not allow such areas to be reduced).

**Q.3 Does the committee support nature-based solutions to reduce the risk of flooding in areas both upstream and downstream?**

A.3 Yes, Nature Based Solutions should become 'business as usual' in our parks and green spaces as they help hold back water and therefore reduce the risk of flooding in our denser urban areas. They are not only a great way of 'slowing the flow' but also creating and enhancing habitats such as wetlands, ponds and swales. Wet areas also store more carbon, so are a great way to help us meet challenging Net Zero targets. We are working in partnership with organisations such as the Environment Agency, Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust and the Steel Valley Project to install a range of Natural Flood Management measures into our green spaces in the Upper Don and Limb Brook – these are great examples of interventions in our spaces 'upstream'. We are also exploring the impacts of the reintroduction of beavers in South Yorkshire with the help of a range of experts. Beavers are 'ecosystem engineers' and build dams which also help 'slow the flow'. We're excited to hear the results of this feasibility later this year. 'Downstream' in the city, it's more challenging as space is limited, but we can still do a lot – it's all about creative and innovative ideas about how water can be held in spaces, often for relatively short periods of time. This only brings benefits – being close to water brings health benefits to our communities as well as creating habitats.

**Questions of Councillor Garry Weatherall to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Kurtis Crossland)**

Members of Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee held a series of workshops designed to develop a bereavement strategy. Issues raised during these workshops included the lack of land to provide burial plots and the lack of investment in facilities and infrastructure that has left the service in breach of regulation.

**Q.1 Can you tell me what progress has been made towards the development of a strategy to deliver investment into this service?**

A.1 We are in the process of developing a Burial, Cremation and Cemetery Green Spaces Strategy to set the direction for the future of these services for the next 25+ years. Public consultation concluded in March 2024 and a members Task and Finish Group concluded in September 2024. Since then, the service has been working to pull together all of the recommendations into a strategy which we aim to take to CPL committee on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 for approval.

Although the strategy itself won't add investment, it will make commitments and set the direction for these services and what they offer to the people of Sheffield. Alongside this the service is working with the Council's finance leads to look at how best to use our budget and plan for the development of new services and new cemetery sites in the future, whilst also remaining mindful of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

**Q.2 If not, can I ask what is the timeline for the development of the strategy?**

A.2 As above. We are unlikely to see any significant changes to the services budget in April 2025, but we are working towards a new budget model for April 2026. Alongside this we are working on a budget proposal for the development of new cemetery sites and other infrastructure now and in the future.

**Q.3 Have any requests been made for a contribution from the Council's budget to purchase land and bring facilities up to standard?**

A.3 No, not yet, but we are working on what the proposal will look like. Due to the Council's financial position any request will need to have an appropriate repayment plan. We are in the process of working out what an affordable borrowing model and repayment plan looks like.

**Q.4 Are there any partners able to help with the delivery of this service?**

A.4 I hope in the future we will be able to invest more in local Friends of Groups and other potential partners who want to help us to deliver the best possible service to the people of Sheffield. This will be covered within the strategy, and we are considering what funding is needed to make our actions meaningful.



**Question of Councillor Dianne Hurst to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Kurtis Crossland)**

With the enactment of the Environment and Nature Recovery Act, SCC now has a statutory duty to recover biodiversity. We have been successful in a bid for species recovery in the Shirebrook Valley and this is in delivery. However, we will not be able to achieve our duty without holistic landscape scale environmental management of grasslands, meaning the issue of biomass disposal is acute.

Answers to questions asked of Chairs in November suggest that joint working between officers in Parks and Countryside and Waste Management Service taking place in order to scope proposals.

**Q. Can you tell me how far officers have got in developing a strategy to help us meet our duties and what learning has taken place for other authorities who have resolved the matter?**

**A.** Parks and Countryside utilise Fletchers to process green waste, which is collected from sites across the city, created through various activities. Due to the changing demands and needs of the Council to deliver nature recovery on a city-wide scale, our approach to land management is changing faster than our funding and procurement routes have. Having reached out to our network within the city, and further afield across our core city partners, we plan to commission expert advice to support further understanding in developing a robust process to enable Parks to be fit for the future demands of the city. We will share the key findings of this work once we have it.

**Questions of Councillor Alexi Dimond to the Chair of the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee (Councillor Martin Smith)**

**Q.1 Sheffield Green Party Councillors and members, and many Sheffield residents were shocked and appalled to learn that weapons company BAE plans to build a new factory manufacturing artillery shells in Sheffield. When did the Council become aware of this?**

A.1 Sheffield City Council were made aware formally of BAEs interest in Sheffield, and that the city was on the shortlist of sites in April 2024, through our normal inward investment procedures. We were made aware that the lease was signed in September.

BAE have stated that the factory will deliver the Company's M777 lightweight towed howitzer manufacturing capability, not shells.

**Q.2 Does this Council support the manufacture of weapons such as shells in Sheffield?**

A.2 BAE Systems chose Sheffield as the best location for a new manufacturing plant, based on the city's local manufacturing industry, research facilities and national assets such as Forgemasters and the local skills and supply chain links.

**Q.3 What will the Council do to ensure shells made in Sheffield are not used to commit violations of human rights and international law such as the genocide in Gaza?**

A.3 Sheffield City Council is not involved with or have influence over any of the contractual and supply chain decisions within BAE Systems. This is a private sector contract, led by an international property and estates agency on behalf of BAE Systems. The export of military related goods is controlled by national, not local government.

**Questions of Councillor Marianne Elliot to the Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee (Councillor Dawn Dale)**

**Q.1** Sharrow Primary School is considering voluntarily joining a multi academy trust, they state in a letter to parents that support from the local authority is reducing. Please can you provide confirmation if this is the case?

A.1 Yes, we can confirm that Sharrow are seeking to join Cascade Multi Academy Trust and have passed a Governors resolution to that effect.

**Q.2** Please provide details of any specific reductions in support.

A.2 Local Authority Officers, including the Interim Director of Early Years, Education and Skills (Pat Butterell) are often in attendance at working groups with the Head Teacher from Sharrow (Evelyn Abram). These working groups are often held at Learn Sheffield where Evelyn is a proactive presence. As Evelyn has a lot of experience as a Head Teacher, she will be aware of the number of officers from the Local Authority who she can call upon for support should she wish to. The school, it is believed, also utilises Learn Sheffield's offers and with this network of both Learn Sheffield and the school's knowledge of contacts within the LA, the school has multiple channels of support to access if / as or when required.

**Q.3** If support is reducing, please clarify if this is also applicable to other local authority schools and provide details.

A.3 As a Local Authority, wanting to work in partnership with all our educational stakeholders, we would always wish to promote our support; be available for support or to signpost education colleagues to the right channels of support. It is also worth noting that the Labour government have removed the previous government's conversion grant which was awarded to schools who become academies and moved away from local authority control, taking affect from 1<sup>st</sup> January.

**Questions of Councillor Paul Turpin to the Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee (Councillor Dawn Dale)**

**Q.1** When does the school dinner contract with Taylor Shaw come to an end?

A.1 31<sup>st</sup> July 2027

**Q.2 When is work on the procurement of a new contract planned to begin?**

A.2 Spring 2025

**Q.3 How many assessments of schools have been carried out since the current contract began?**

A.3 214

Schools are audited, and any which do not meet contract standards have an improvement plan put in place. Those schools are revisited to ensure changes have been implemented.

**Q.4 Can you please provide past increases and any planned increases in the cost per meal for parents of school dinners?**

A.4

SCC School Food Contract - Prices to parents

	Previous contract	Year 1 of current contract (2021-22)	Year 2 of current contract (2022-23)	Year 3 of current contract (2023-24)	Year 4 of current contract (2024-25)
Nursery	1.75	1.75	1.75	2.00	2.30
Primary	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.30	2.60
Secondary*	2.36	2.10	2.24	2.54	2.88

\* the notional value of a Free School Meal in secondary schools

Price increases are calculated annually in line with contract conditions

**Q.5 What has been done to assess if the meals served are good value for money since the cost to families has risen?**

A.5 The contract is retendered periodically to ensure that meals are competitively priced at the start of the contract period. Those prices can rise each September up to the rate of CPI (in the 12 months to the previous December). Regular audits ensure that the quality of food remains high and meet School Food Standards irrespective of any mid-year increases in food / staffing costs.

**Question of Councillor Richard Williams to the Chair of the Finance and Performance Policy Committee (Councillor Zahira Naz)**

Across the country Councils face potential deficits pressures which have come about thanks to increases in costs and demand for SEND services. Nationally these deficits are estimated at around £4 billion and are expected to rise to £5.9 billion in 2025. They are, however, being left off the councils' budget books thanks to a process known as 'statutory overrides'.

The 'statutory override' accountancy method is set to expire in March 2026, which could lead to the deficits being returned to council's books.

**Q. Does Sheffield City Council currently have a SEND deficit that comes under the 'statutory overrides' process, and if so, what is the value of this?**

A. As of 2023/24, Sheffield City Council has no cumulative deficit in its Dedicated Schools Grant. However, like other local authorities nationally, the High Needs Block faces significant pressure and is projected to overspend this year due to rising demand.

The current forecast overspend is £8.7m which is due to increased demand and growth in SEN support/special school places. £2.7m of this is planned in-year over-allocation from reserves but not yet drawn-down.

To manage funding effectively, we have introduced a banded resource allocation system and locality-based models to ensure consistent and targeted support. We continue to work closely with the Schools Forum and the wider school sector to address funding challenges and develop solutions.

**Question of Councillor Qais Al-Ahdal to the Chair of the Finance and Performance Policy Committee (Councillor Zahira Naz)**

**Q.1 You said you have contacted Islington Council in the last Council meeting regarding their questions and answers they received from Barclays. What have you heard from them?**

A.1 It is important to note that Islington Council were clear and explicit that they have not excluded Barclays. Instead, there are looking at how they would better define and score the Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) requirements of a new contract. Moreover, they are not starting their procurement until next year (2025). Moreover, they were clear the process needs to be legal and cannot entertain any risk regarding their banking partner.

As such, it is not correct as you have stated previously, that Islington Council have ended their contract with Barclays or are seeking to do so, and indeed they are going through a similar process as we are doing as we develop our Ethical Procurement Policy.

**Q.2 What steps have you taken to make sure the new Ethical Procurement Policy to consider the plight of Palestine?**

A.2 The Ethical Procurement Policy aims to provide a framework that supports the Council to objectively discharge its ethical obligations in procurement activities and the management of third-party agreements, in accordance with relevant legislation. Although individual conflicts are not specifically addressed, the policy will assist the Council in evaluating the impact of global geopolitical risks on its procurement activities and third-party agreements, and in making informed recommendations on whether to continue or discontinue specific activities.

**Questions of Councillor Elle Dodd to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)**

There are reports of local authorities' throwing away the belongings of recently deceased council tenants or those in temporary accommodation, including items of significant sentimental value and precious heirlooms, including shocking instances such as a relatives' ashes being destroyed by local authority operatives when a tenancy ended.

**Q.1 What measures does Sheffield City Council have to ensure that the storage and collection of valuables is handled correctly and empathetically for all concerned?**

A.1 When a tenant gives notice to quit their property, they are asked to sign a quitting form which includes information about removal of items before the keys are handed in to the council. Staff receiving the quitting will also provide information, advice and support if an individual requires more time to arrange removals as we recognise that moving home and arranging disposal of items can be a stressful time for people, particularly where they do not have any family or friends that can provide additional support.

We have a clear procedure on removal and storage of any items under section 41 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 which involves contacting the tenant in writing, giving notice under section 41 and timescales for collections if the tenant has not cleared the property once the property is vacant. If after the notice period items still have not been collected, then they may be disposed of.

However, staff make every effort to contact the tenant or next of kin to avoid any items being put into storage or disposed of.

**Q.2 I am aware that different local authorities have different policies regarding the collection of items, with some accepting proof of identity from the next of kin in order to allow access to a property while others insist on grants of probate. Can you please detail how Sheffield City Council handles such matters?**

A.2 Where we have details of the next of kin recorded on our systems, we will use those details and individuals will be required to provide proof of identification before access is given to the property to remove items on behalf of the tenant.

Where the tenant has passed away and there are no contact details recorded for the next of kin or where there is any uncertainty, we contact Executor Services who will aim to establish the next of kin to ensure we are letting the right person into the property to remove any personal items.

Throughout the process, staff make every effort to contact the tenant or next of kin when a tenancy has ended and ensure that they are given advice and support to make any arrangement to clear the property.

**Questions of Councillor Sophie Thornton to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)**

**Q.1 How many outstanding cases of damp and mould are there in Council homes?**

A.1 As of 27th November 2024, there are currently 3,885 reported cases of damp and mould.

**Q.2 Are there priority criteria with regard to damp and mould cases and if so could these be shared?**

A.2 We are changing our approach to diagnosing and dealing with cases of damp and mould and a presentation was provided, followed by an engaging discussion, at the Knowledge Briefing on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024. We are currently working with some external consultants to ensure our policy and processes included a clear categorisation of risk and that cases are dealt with appropriately. We will share more information as soon as we can.

**Q.3 What is the current number of outstanding jobs in Repairs and Maintenance?**

A.3 As of 27th November, the live number of repairs is 22,738 of which 12,459 are overdue. The number of overdue repairs and total number of repairs continues to reduce from a peak work in progress of 35,772 and 22,664 overdue repairs in January 2024. We are aiming to achieve an ideal WIP of 6.6% of our total annual volume equating to approximately 10,800 repairs.

**Q.4 The recent Ombudsman report for 2023/24 showed that Repairs & Maintenance had the highest number of complaints of any service across the Council for the second year in a row. What changes are being implemented this year to prevent this happening yet again, and how are attempts to improve the service differing from last year's attempts which clearly did not have the desired impact?**

A.4 As highlighted above, whilst we acknowledge that significant improvements to the repairs service are still required, significant progress has been made so far this year, reducing works in progress by 13,034 and reducing overdue orders by 10,205. We are working closely with the Regulator of Social Housing to deliver on actions set out in a clear plan with the intention to achieve a high performing service by June 2025. Additional in-house and



sub-contractor resources are being deployed throughout the coming months which will have a significant impact as we enter phase two of this plan.

Throughout the year we have seen improvements in our response to emergency repairs – 82.4% being completed on time in April 24 improving to 90.4% in October 24. We have also seen customer satisfaction increase from 64% in April 24 reaching a peak of 75% in July 2024 albeit with some reduction since, consistent with colder weather and some of the challenges that this can present.

Finally, a decision was made at organisational level to move the repairs service into the Housing Directorate of the Council following an external review and recommendations to integrate these services. We believe that this will also elicit closer working links to other teams whose work also has an impact on improving the repairs service.

This page is intentionally left blank