

Agenda Annex

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – 4TH DECEMBER 2024

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE MEETING

1. DEBATE ON A PETITION REQUESTING THE COUNCIL TO DELIVER NEW BURIAL SPACE/PROVISION IN THE CITY

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Council refers the matter for consideration by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee.

2. GAMBLING ACT 2005 – STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES (GAMBLING POLICY) 2025

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Council:-

- (a) notes that a licensing authority shall, before each successive period of three years, both prepare a statement of the principles that they propose to apply in exercising their functions under the Gambling Act 2005 during that period, and publish that statement; and
- (b) approves the draft Statement of Principles (Policy) under the Gambling Act 2005, recommended by the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee, under Part 3.2.1 of the Constitution, as set out in the report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services, now submitted.

3. A FAIR DEAL FOR SOCIAL CARE PROVIDERS

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

notes that:-

- (a) from April 2025 National Insurance employer's contributions (NICs) will rise by 1.2%;
- (b) from April 2025 the secondary threshold will be lowered, meaning that employers will start to pay NICs on employees' earnings from £5,000 instead of the current £9,100;
- (c) the Chancellor of the Exchequer has recognised "there will be consequences" as a result of the Budget announcements regarding employer NICs;
- (d) analysis from the Nuffield Trust shows that changes to employer NICs will cost the adult social care sector more than £900m next year;
- (e) the same report shows the total burden on the 18,000 independent organisations providing adult social care in England will be £2.8billion in the next financial year;
- (f) Sheffield is grappling with significant financial challenges, and the Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee is forecast to be £9.5m overspent this year;
- (g) in response to the Nuffield Trust's analysis, the Local Government Association have stated that "immediate adequate investment is needed in order to address unmet and under-met need and ensure timely access to social care for all who need it";

believes that:-

- (h) subjecting social care providers to higher taxes is counterproductive and will worsen the health and care crisis;
- (i) social care services are provided by a range of organisations including hospices and the voluntary sector, and all but the very smallest will be hit by the employers' NICs increase;
- (j) the Government's lack of ambition and deafening silence on social care is disappointing;
- (k) GP surgeries and many health and care providers will not be shielded from the full force of this tax increase and will have no choice but to cut services and staff numbers;
- (l) ultimately, people in care will suffer the consequences of these employers' NICs rises;

- (m) in Sheffield, some Social Care providers, particularly smaller ones, may become unviable, with the consequent impact on users of those services;
- (n) the loss of smaller services would in turn make it more difficult for the Council to address needs;
- (o) the Government should introduce free personal care along the lines successfully brought in by the Scottish Government, to ensure dignity in old age and for disabled people;

resolves to:-

- (p) call on the Government to exempt social care providers from the increase in employers' NICs;
- (q) call for cross-party talks on social care immediately to deliver the sector long-term, sustainable funding; and
- (r) ask the Leader of the Council to forward a copy of this motion to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

4. PROTECT OUR RIVERS

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes Sheffield's identity is directly shaped by our rivers, from powering mills and forges to the historical driving force behind the steel and cutlery industries;
- (b) notes that today our rivers provide natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and habitats for diverse wildlife;
- (c) believes that Sheffield's rivers play an important part in the city's future;
- (d) celebrates the work to de-culvert the River Sheaf at Castlegate, to open up the River Sheaf at its confluence with the River Don for the first time in over a century, alongside a new public park, Sheaf Fields, celebrating the birthplace of our city;
- (e) believes that the country's rivers and seas face significant challenges after 14 years of neglect under Conservative-led governments;
- (f) notes that according to the Rivers Trust, 35% of England's rivers fail to meet 'good condition' due to treated sewage;
- (g) condemns the record levels of sewage pumped into Britain's rivers in 2023, with Yorkshire Water discharging sewage into Sheffield's rivers 4,781 times, a 33% increase from the previous year, totalling over 18,000 hours of discharge;
- (h) notes that earlier this year, Yorkshire Water paid a penalty of £150,000 for pollution incidents affecting the River Don;
- (i) recognises that sewage is just one form of water pollution and other sources such as industrial, agricultural, oil leaks and urban runoffs need addressing;
- (j) thanks the many local organisations and volunteers, such as the Sheaf and Porter Rivers Trust, the Upper Don Trail Trust and the River Stewardship Company, throughout the city who commit time and effort to protect and celebrate our waterways;
- (k) welcomes the Government's announcements to crack down on polluting water companies, increasing the ability of the Environment Agency to bring forward criminal charges against water executives, increased penalties for polluters, and independent monitoring of every sewage outlet;
- (l) notes that in the previous Parliament, Sheffield MPs including Olivia Blake and Clive Betts voted with the Conservatives to force Ofwat to consider the impact of economic growth on water companies when imposing a fine or other action;
- (m) believes that this has weakened the powers of regulators in holding water companies to account and continues to put profit before environment in the water industry;

- (n) believes that a 'Blue Flag' programme for rivers, streams and lakes, like current Blue Flag beach status, would mark an important step in ensuring clean and healthy water;
- (o) welcomes the launch of a new Independent Water Commission to review the water industry and ensure that regulations necessary to clean up our waterways are introduced;
- (p) welcomes work on an integrated Blue and Green Spaces Strategy by the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee, involving partners and a cross-party, cross-committee working group;
- (q) recognises the 20-year achievement of Sheffield Waterways Strategy Group as the only forum for all public, private and voluntary bodies with a responsibility or interest in our rivers, including the Council and now including Yorkshire Water;
- (r) thanks citizen scientists highlighting the scandal of sewage discharges by water companies and acknowledges their vital role and the need for public accessibility of rivers for this purpose;
- (s) recognises the need for a joined-up approach by the Council to increase access for citizen science and also to take opportunities for natural flood management, active travel routes, tourism and celebrating Sheffield's industrial heritage;
- (t) notes that this Council, as a major owner of land along Sheffield's rivers, has riparian rights and duties to contribute towards maintaining the watercourses;
- (u) believes that Ofwat should be replaced with a 'Clean Water Authority', which would regulate water companies both financially and environmentally;

resolves to:-

- (v) call for Yorkshire Water to be transparent and make a firm commitment to reducing sewage discharges into Sheffield's rivers and streams;
- (w) request that the Transport, Regeneration and Climate and Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committees add river quality and restoration to their work programme;
- (x) continue celebrating and supporting the invaluable work of local groups protecting our rivers, ensuring they are central to Sheffield's climate and environmental priorities; and
- (y) ask the Chief Executive to forward a copy of this motion to Yorkshire Water.

5. SUPPORTING NEW EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS FOR SHEFFIELD WORKERS

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) supports the Government's new landmark Employment Rights Bill that will help workers in Sheffield by taking steps to make work pay and upgrade workers' rights;
- (b) welcomes measures in the Bill to provide protection against unfair dismissal from day one, establish parental and bereavement leave from day one, end unscrupulous practices of fire and rehire and fire and replace, make flexible working the norm where practical, deliver stronger protections for pregnant women and new mothers, and strengthen statutory sick pay;
- (c) supports Liberal Democrat MPs' amendments to the Bill including setting out entitlement to kinship care leave and requiring companies with more than 250 employees to publish information about their parental leave and pay policies;
- (d) notes that, according to the Local Government Association, costs resulting from the Bill will exacerbate service pressures in local authorities unless they are matched by increased funding;
- (e) notes that thousands of workers in Sheffield are currently employed on a zero-hour contract, and believes that the ending of exploitative zero-hour contracts and strengthening of employment rights will be a big help to many;
- (f) believes that we should find ways to improve rights and conditions for those on zero-hour contracts such as establishing a new 'dependent contractor' status with entitlements such as minimum earnings levels, sick pay and holiday entitlement and increasing the minimum wage for zero-hours contract workers by 20%;
- (g) supports the measures in the Bill to establish a new Fair Work Agency to enforce employment rights, such as holiday pay, and to provide support and guidance for employers;
- (h) supports the Government's commitment to increasing the national living wage by 6.7% to increase pay for thousands of working people in Sheffield;
- (i) supports measures in the Bill to modernise trade union laws to help unions in their vital role representing workers' interests and improving working conditions, including introducing rights for trade unions to access workplaces and repealing restrictive legislation;
- (j) recognises analysis by the Trades Union Congress which shows the benefit to the economy of reducing workplace stress, improving staff well-being, improving minimum wage compliance and increasing labour market participation;

- (k) is concerned that the increase in employers' national insurance contributions may lead to redundancies, loss of new job opportunities and therefore fewer employees able to benefit from improvements in employment rights;
- (l) believes a fairer tax system, that treats all types of income equally, would address this problem and help create a fairer society where prosperity benefits the many rather than the few;
- (m) notes that four day working week trials have shown improved productivity, well-being, work-life balance, recruitment and retention, sickness absence, and carbon emissions;

resolves to:-

- (n) thank trade union convenors for their work at Sheffield City Council, noting the positive work they do for both employees and employer, including promoting workplace wellbeing and providing representation, support and advocacy;
- (o) commit to work with businesses, partners, unions and residents to grow the economy of Sheffield and increase productivity, wages and jobs growth; and
- (p) affirm our commitment to promoting fair and equitable employment practices in Sheffield.

6. BRINGING BACK OUR BUSES

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

notes that:-

- (a) the ongoing bus reform consultation by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) towards bus reform, including initiating a public consultation with franchising as the preferred option;
- (b) that South Yorkshire only receives £10 per resident of funding towards buses, compared to almost £40 in West Yorkshire;
- (c) that the bus fare cap will be raised nationally from £2 to £3 from January which would mean the average commuter who takes the bus every working day of the week would face an extra £448 bill in 2025;
- (d) that local leaders in Liverpool, Manchester, and West Yorkshire have pledged to keep the £2 fare cap for at least three months of next year, but that the Mayor of South Yorkshire has not made the same pledge;
- (e) that South Yorkshire received less Bus Service Improvement Plan revenue funding for 2025/26 than Liverpool City Region, despite having a similar total population;
- (f) the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has pledged to create a new bus company;
- (g) the sterling work of Better Buses for South Yorkshire;

believes that:-

- (h) the current system of deregulated buses has failed our city, and improvements to our bus network are desperately needed;
- (i) local authorities should be granted the powers they need to restore bus routes and add new ones where there is local need;
- (j) the fare cap increase is like a bus tax for people across Sheffield which will impact users struggling to make ends meet as well as local businesses and high streets;
- (k) the money received through Bus Service Improvement Plan revenue funding should be used to restore routes that have been previously cut;
- (l) the principle of free public transport, which has been achieved in several European cities, should be supported;
- (m) the bus fare cap increase is discriminatory, affecting those who can least afford it;

- (n) buses are vital for people who don't have access to private vehicles;
- (o) affordable, frequent bus services are critical to addressing the climate emergency and improving air quality;
- (p) reliability is improved when buses are given priority through interventions like bus gates, bus lanes, and effective enforcement of obstruction of bus lanes during operational hours;
- (q) the new cross-committee working group looking at enforcement of traffic infringements is welcomed;

resolves to:-

- (r) call on the Mayor of South Yorkshire to retain the £2 bus fare cap until at least December 2025 and extend the fare cap to trams;
- (s) encourage members of the public to take part in the bus reform consultation which can be accessed at the SYMCA website; and
- (t) ask the Chief Executive to forward a copy of this motion to the Mayor of South Yorkshire.

7. ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COUNCIL COMMITTEES IN 2024-25 - UPDATE

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes the impact on the allocation of seats on Council Committees of the new political composition of the Council, following the result of the Woodhouse Ward By-Election held on 28th November 2024, as set out in the report of the Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement now submitted;
- (b) notes the initial allocation of seats to political groups on individual committees before final adjustment, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and which is based on the committees (and their sizes) which were approved at the annual meeting of the Council on 15th May 2024 for operation in the Municipal Year 2024-25;
- (c) in order to satisfy the requirement to ensure that each group has the required number of seats overall in comparison to the total number of seats available on all committees to reflect their composition on the Council as a whole, approves (i) the final adjustments of seven seats as shown in the schedule circulated at the meeting and (ii) revised appointments of Councillors to give effect to the new seat allocations and reflect the wishes of the political groups, as follows:-

Councillor Willis Marshall to fill a vacancy on the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee;
Councillor Gail Smith to fill a vacancy on the Licensing Committee;
- (d) for the purposes of Council Procedure Rule 25.6, gives the consent of the Council in any case where a Member chooses not to be appointed to serve on any Policy or Regulatory Committee; and
- (e) notes that, as respects the appointment of Members to serve on Council Committees, where vacancies exist or in cases of urgency to ensure quoracy or representation, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the relevant political group whip, has the authority to appoint Members to serve on such Committees, as necessary, on the understanding that details of such appointments will be reported to the next or subsequent meetings of the Council.