

Agenda Item 10

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of the City of Sheffield held on Thursday 18 March 2021, at 5.00 pm, as a remote meeting in accordance with the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, pursuant to notice duly given and Summonses duly served.

PRESENT

THE LORD MAYOR (Councillor Tony Downing)
THE DEPUTY LORD MAYOR (Councillor Gail Smith)

1	<i>Beauchief & Greenhill Ward</i> Simon Clement-Jones Bob Pullin Richard Shaw	10	<i>East Ecclesfield Ward</i> Andy Bainbridge Vic Bowden Moya O'Rourke	19	<i>Nether Edge & Sharrow Ward</i> Peter Garbutt Jim Steinke Alison Teal
2	<i>Beighton Ward</i> Bob McCann Chris Rosling-Josephs Sophie Wilson	11	<i>Ecclesall Ward</i> Roger Davison Barbara Masters Shaffaq Mohammed	20	<i>Park & Arbourthorne</i> Ben Miskell Jack Scott
3	<i>Birley Ward</i> Denise Fox Bryan Lodge Karen McGowan	12	<i>Firth Park Ward</i> Abdul Khayum Abtisam Mohamed	21	<i>Richmond Ward</i> Mike Drabble Dianne Hurst
4	<i>Broomhill & Sharrow Vale Ward</i> Angela Argenzio Kaltum Rivers	13	<i>Fulwood Ward</i> Sue Alston Andrew Sangar Cliff Woodcraft	22	<i>Shiregreen & Brightside Ward</i> Dawn Dale Peter Price Garry Weatherall
5	<i>Burngreave Ward</i> Jackie Drayton Talib Hussain Mark Jones	14	<i>Gleadless Valley Ward</i> Lewis Dagnall Cate McDonald Paul Turpin	23	<i>Southey Ward</i> Mike Chaplin Tony Damms Jayne Dunn
6	<i>City Ward</i> Douglas Johnson Ruth Mersereau Martin Phipps	15	<i>Graves Park Ward</i> Ian Auckland Sue Auckland Steve Ayriss	24	<i>Stannington Ward</i> Penny Baker Vickie Priestley
7	<i>Crookes & Crosspool Ward</i> Tim Huggan Mohammed Mahroof Anne Murphy	16	<i>Hillsborough Ward</i> Bob Johnson George Lindars-Hammond Josie Paszek	25	<i>Stocksbridge & Upper Don Ward</i> Jack Clarkson Julie Grocutt
8	<i>Darnall Ward</i> Mazher Iqbal Mary Lea Zahira Naz	17	<i>Manor Castle Ward</i> Terry Fox Sioned-Mair Richards	26	<i>Walkley Ward</i> Ben Curran Neale Gibson
9	<i>Dore & Totley Ward</i> Joe Otten Colin Ross Martin Smith	18	<i>Mosborough Ward</i> Tony Downing Kevin Oxley Gail Smith	27	<i>West Ecclesfield Ward</i> Alan Hooper Adam Hurst Mike Levery
				28	<i>Woodhouse Ward</i> Mick Rooney Jackie Satur Paul Wood

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Baker, Julie Dore and Alan Law.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest made by Members of the Council.

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL AREA COMMITTEES

- 3.1 RESOLVED: On the Motion of Councillor Tony Damms, seconded by Councillor Dianne Hurst, that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 4 (Suspension and Amendment of Council Procedure Rules) and 11 (Motions which may be moved without notice):-

(a) Council Procedure Rule 17.5 be suspended to remove the 2 minute time limit on the speeches of the movers and seconders of amendments and a new time limit be set whereby a total of 20 minutes will be shared by the mover and seconder of each amendment, and all other speakers shall have 2 minutes;

(b) Council Procedure Rule 17.6 be suspended to remove the 25 minute time limit for the item of business; and

(c) Council Procedure Rules 17.7(d) and 17.12(a) be suspended to remove the right of reply for the mover of the motion.

- 3.2 It was formally moved by Councillor Tony Damms and formally seconded by Councillor Dianne Hurst, that the following recommendations made by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 17th March, 2021, arising from its consideration of a joint report of the Executive Director, People Services, and the Director of Legal and Governance, setting out a proposal to empower communities by shifting power from the Town Hall to communities in every part of the City, be approved:-

“RESOLVED: That the Council approves the establishment of seven Local Area Committees and approves the draft Area Committee Terms of Reference and Area Committee Procedure Rules attached to this report at Appendix 1 and 2 as changes to the Constitution, together with any minor consequential amendments, to take effect from the Annual Meeting of the Council”

- 3.3 Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Bob Johnson, seconded by Councillor Paul Wood, as an amendment, that the recommendations of the Cabinet held on 17th March 2021, as relates to the Establishment of Local Area Committees, be approved with the addition of new paragraphs as follows:-

(b) notes that this Administration is revolutionising how citizens can influence the decisions that matter to communities, committing to a modern way of engaging, empowering and enabling residents to shape their local areas;

(c) notes that the new Local Area Committees will engage, enable, and empower communities across the city with increasing control over decision making, marking a major shift in power to communities with a rolling programme of devolution over the next 12 to 18 months;

(d) believes that this is far from a return to Community Assemblies, and that the new arrangements will go much further than they ever did in empowering committees and making the Council more accountable and closer to local needs;

(e) notes that the Committees will:

(i) be the principal means by which the Council engages, empowers, enables, and seeks the active participation of all residents and community organisations on any topic of local interest;

(ii) actively utilise all available communication methods, including social media, improved local websites and blogs and where possible the use of virtual meeting technology;

(iii) provide a geographical framework that, over time, will be used to prioritise and direct the local delivery of an increasing number of Council services;

(iv) oversee the production of a co-produced annual Community Plan, with local Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations, with a strong commitment to delivery from Council services and partner organisations, the Community Plans will reflect resident priorities;

(v) ensure that plans have ambitious but achievable improvement targets that have been agreed with the community, feeding into, and influencing the strategic plans of the Council;

(vi) work with local partners and stakeholders to ensure services are joined up and operating effectively in line with the needs of local communities;

(vii) work closely with Parish councils and bring forward matchfunding to deliver local projects;

(viii) work in consultation with local Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations to ensure greater efficiency of resources, improved services, and a stronger local voice;

(ix) monitor and hold to account those who are responsible for delivering on the Community Plans actions and performance targets both SCC and

partner organisations;

(x) meet a minimum of four times a year, with the public and petitioners able to make direct ask of them; and

(xi) be empowered to set priorities and direct resources;

(f) welcomes the comments from the Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Sheffield that “this is an important opportunity to empower communities to be actively involved in decision-making and to help to address inequalities across the city”;

(g) believes that the Local Area Committees will help keep the council – both employees and councillors – rooted in the communities they serve, and help to ensure that decisions are devolved to a local level, rather than being made centrally in the town hall;

(h) believes that this will help local decision making in communities – this is not about adding a layer of bureaucracy but the opposite; devolving decisions away from town hall and into our communities;

(i) notes the additional measures this Administration is enacting as part of the new Local Area Committees, which will mean that the Council is going much further than it has done so before in empowering communities to shape decisions about their areas, and that though the full details will be worked up over the next 12-18 months, this Administration is proposing the following:-

Extra money at a ward level for communities:

(i) doubling Ward Pots;

(ii) increasing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocation available to local areas to 20% - it is currently 15%, with Ward allocation based on an IMD calculation (indices of multiple deprivation) , as approved at Cabinet in 2018. This Administration will use an additional 5% from Central CIL to be allocated across all Local Area Committees to be spent on local infrastructure, as is required by the Central CIL and could include shared projects with the remaining Central CIL;

(iii) believes the Committees will be routed in our desire to tackle inequalities, with the indices of multiple deprivation being a key determinant for funding;

(iv) providing an additional £100k to each Local Area Committee to be spent, in line with the community plan, on helping with the localised rebuilding post-Covid;

(v) providing an extra £100K to each Local Area Committee to tackle fly tipping & graffiti;

(vi) believes that the Local Area Committees could be developed to be involved in the prioritisation and spending of Section 106 money, and that potential options for this should be considered;

(vii) for local parks, providing each Local Area Committee with a senior named Officer working with them, to provide a direct point of contact and closer alignment to community needs;

(viii) to tackle parking problems each Local Area Committee will have a single, named senior Officer working with them, to ensure greater responsiveness and direct action;

(ix) for Community Safety, each Local Area Committee will have dedicated Street Wardens working with them, which will include Apprentices;

(x) for Youth services the Local Area Committees will have a crucial role in shaping and influencing how services operate to meet the needs of young people, delivering general targeted youth work, and positive activities and experiences;

(xi) for delivering cleaner and greener streets the Local Area Committee will have a dedicated officer working with them able to combat problems, including issuing fines; and

(xii) for Housing each Local Area Committee will have a dedicated housing officer, who will provide reports and details, including on housing repairs, to the Committee and the work of the housing service will be held to account and scrutinised by the Committee, ensuring greater local accountability;

(j) notes that these are just some of the initial changes this Administration wishes to see and that further plans will be developed over the coming months;

(k) believes that whether centralised council decision making is delivered by the Cabinet Model or the Committee System, has little relevance to the new Local Area Committees – which are instead about empowering communities at a local level and devolving decision-making power, which is a separate issue to city wide governance and of likely greater importance to the vast majority of Sheffield residents; and

(l) believes that this process of further empowering communities and devolving decisions will mean a greater focus at a local level, but that this Administration intends that this is just the start and that, quite simply, the council will never be the same again.

3.4 It was then then moved by Councillor Andrew Sangar, seconded by Councillor Ian Auckland, as an amendment, that the recommendations of the Cabinet held on 17th March 2021, as relates to the Establishment of Local Area Committees, be approved with the addition of new paragraphs

as follows:-

1. Believes that decisions by democratically elected politicians should be made at the lowest practical level, so that individuals and communities are empowered over decisions which affect their lives;
2. Reminds the Council of the poorly thought out and unnecessary scrapping of community assemblies by the majority group in 2013, which resulted in the re-centralisation of power and decision-making to the leader and cabinet;
3. Notes the limited effect the local area partnerships have made to the work of the Council and the city, despite great efforts by some elected members of all parties and some council officers;
4. Notes the work of successive cabinet members since 2013; Councillors Iqbal, Richards, Scott, Blake, Steinke, and Fox; in drawing up plans to devolve some power or money to local area committees or similar, and notes with disappointment and dismay that none of their proposals found their way to a cabinet report for seven years;
5. Notes that the 'Big City Conversation' attempted to ask Sheffield residents about their view on council governance but did not expressly engage citizens with the devolution of council decision making powers to local area committees;
6. Believes that the Council is only debating this now because of the efforts of 'It's Our City' in bringing a petition of more than 5% of Sheffield voters to demand a change in the governance of the city council; and is shocked that the majority group is refusing to take a position in the referendum despite the initial trigger of the petition being their own heavy-handed, centralised rule of the Council followed by their complete failure to discuss the proposals with the petitioners;
7. Sees the actions of the majority group as a cynical attempt to mislead the people of Sheffield that they have a thought through plan to devolve powers to local area committees;
8. Recalls that Community Assemblies were introduced in May 2009 after twelve months preparatory work, and therefore rejects the need for any extension beyond May 2022 for the introduction of new local area committees;
9. Notes that the main opposition budget amendment would have added an extra £500,000 to local area committees as well as increasing the neighbourhood portion of CIL from 15% to 30% for use by local communities, substantial devolution of Local Transport Plan Funding, and created a fund available to local councillors to use on projects and capital investments in their wards through boosting ward pots to £10,000 in every ward;

10. Believes that the proposals in the report before the Council today are incomplete; lacking details of any proposed responsibilities, structure, boundaries, or budgets of these local area committees;

11. Requests that council officers draw up detailed proposals and implementation plans for the new local area committees, to be called community assemblies, using the current seven groupings of four wards in each of the existing local area partnerships so that the scheme can be quickly established; and that the plans recognise the importance of partnerships with community, voluntary, and faith groups, and that regular updates are brought back to elected members between now and full implementation in May 2022; and

12. Requests that council officers understand that the devolved powers and budgets must, as a minimum, be greater than those of the community assemblies when they were abolished in 2013; and that there must be a concomitant decrease in the powers of the centre, whether cabinet or committees. There should be a presumption in favour of decision making powers at the community assembly level, in respect of service delivery and specific services.

3.5 It was then moved by Councillor Alison Teal, seconded by Councillor Kaltum Rivers, as an amendment, that the recommendations of the Cabinet held on 17th March 2021, as relates to the Establishment of Local Area Committees, be amended by the deletion of all the words after the words "That the Council", and the addition of the following words:-

1. Believes the Administration's rush to get this new system approved is politically motivated;

2. Notes community and faith groups' calls for full public consultation on the proposals in the email to all councillors from Centre for Welfare Reform, Faithstar, It's Our City! and Opus;

3. Believes that genuinely carrying out council functions at a local level is a positive way of engaging more people with the decisions that affect them and their communities;

4. Therefore believes it is vital to encourage as much participation as possible, as a system forced upon the city without any consultation with councillors or communities is not genuine and cannot be truly representative;

5. Believes the Administration's top-down approach is flawed and notes that the existing system of Local Area Partnerships already sets a framework for locality working - if it were properly resourced;

6. Condemns the Administration for consistently reducing funding, resources, staff and responsibilities to neighbourhood working over the last

ten years;

7. Condemns the reckless use of precious financial reserves that have been preserved throughout the austerity years and the pandemic that could have been spent on social care, supporting the most vulnerable, addressing the climate and biodiversity emergency or anything else;

8. Is concerned that the equality impact assessment mentioned in the report has not been carried out, despite a statement to the contrary;

9. Is concerned about the potential for gerrymandering in the as yet undefined boundaries of the local areas, which is fundamental to the distribution of council resources across the city; and

10. Resolves to consult the public fully on these proposals after the governance referendum and local elections in May.

3.6 After contributions from another 41 Members, the amendment moved by Councillor Bob Johnson was put to the vote and was carried.

3.7 The amendment moved by Councillor Andrew Sangar was then put to the vote and was negated.

3.7.1 The votes on the amendment were ordered to be recorded and were as follows:-

For the amendment (25) - The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Gail Smith) and Councillors Simon Clement-Jones, Bob Pullin, Richard Shaw, Bob McCann, Tim Huggan, Mohammed Mahroof, Joe Otten, Colin Ross, Martin Smith, Vic Bowden, Roger Davison, Barbara Masters, Shaffaq Mohammed, Sue Alston, Andrew Sangar, Cliff Woodcraft, Ian Auckland, Sue Auckland, Steve Ayris, Kevin Oxley, Penny Baker, Vickie Priestley, Alan Hooper and Mike Levery.

Against the amendment (51) - The Lord Mayor (Councillor Tony Downing) and Councillors Chris Rosling Josephs, Sophie Wilson, Denise Fox, Bryan Lodge, Karen McGowan, Jackie Drayton, Talib Hussain, Mark Jones, Anne Murphy, Mazher Iqbal, Mary Lea, Zahira Naz, Andy Bainbridge, Moya O'Rourke, Abdul Khayum, Abtisam Mohamed, Lewis Dagnall, Cate McDonald, Bob Johnson, George Lindars-Hammond, Josie Paszek, Terry Fox, Sioned-Mair Richards, Jim

Steinke, Ben Miskell, Jack Scott, Mike Drabble, Dianne Hurst, Dawn Dale, Peter Price, Garry Weatherall, Mike Chaplin, Tony Damms, Jayne Dunn, Julie Grocutt, Ben Curran, Neale Gibson, Adam Hurst, Mick Rooney, Jackie Satur, Paul Wood, Angela Argenzio, Kaltum Rivers, Douglas Johnson, Ruth Mersereau, Martin Phipps, Paul Turpin, Peter Garbutt, Alison Teal and Jack Clarkson.

Abstained from voting on the amendment (0) NIL

3.8 The amendment moved by Councillor Alison Teal was then put to the vote and was negatived.

3.9 The original Motion, as amended, was then put as a Substantive Motion in the following form and carried:-

RESOLVED: That this Council:

(a) approves the establishment of seven Local Area Committees and approves the draft Area Committee Terms of Reference and Area Committee Procedure Rules attached to this report at Appendix 1 and 2 as changes to the Constitution, together with any minor consequential amendments, to take effect from the Annual Meeting of the Council;

(b) notes that this Administration is revolutionising how citizens can influence the decisions that matter to communities, committing to a modern way of engaging, empowering and enabling residents to shape their local areas;

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(f) welcomes the comments from the Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Sheffield that “this is an important opportunity to empower communities to be actively involved in decision-making and to help to address inequalities across the city”;

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will have a dedicated officer working with them able to combat problems, including issuing fines; and

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(j) notes that these are just some of the initial changes this Administration wishes to see and that further plans will be developed over the coming months;

(k) believes that whether centralised council decision making is delivered by the Cabinet Model or the Committee System, has little relevance to the new Local Area Committees – which are instead about empowering communities at a local level and devolving decision-making power, which is a separate issue to city wide governance and of likely greater importance to the vast majority of Sheffield residents; and

(l) believes that that this process of further empowering communities and devolving decisions will mean a greater focus at a local level, but that this Administration intends that this is just the start and that, quite simply, the Council will never be the same again

3.9.1 (NOTE: The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Gail Smith) and Councillors Simon Clement-Jones, Bob Pullin, Richard Shaw, Bob McCann, Tim Huggan, Mohammed Mahroof, Joe Otten, Colin Ross, Martin Smith, Vic Bowden, Roger Davison, Barbara Masters, Shaffaq Mohammed, Sue Alston, Andrew Sangar, Cliff Woodcraft, Ian Auckland, Sue Auckland, Steve Ayris, Kevin Oxley, Penny Baker, Vickie Priestley, Alan Hooper and Mike Levery voted for paragraph (a) and abstained from voting on paragraphs (b) to (l) of the Substantive Motion, and asked for this to be recorded.)

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