

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 14TH DECEMBER 2022

List of Amendments (to Notices of Motion) received by the Chief Executive

ITEM OF BUSINESS NO.7 – NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING “NO MORE EXCUSES ON HOUSING REPAIRS”

1. Amendment to be moved by Councillor Fran Belbin, seconded by Councillor Nabeela Mowlana

That the Motion now submitted be amended by:-

1. the addition of the following sub-paragraphs under paragraph (c):-
 - (6) since 2010 government has significantly increased pressures on the HRA, through sustained lack of investment for local authorities and the public services which communities rely on;
 - (7) from 2010-2018 government put a cap on council borrowing for housebuilding, which significantly added to the pressure of housing waiting lists with the Council unable to build to meet demand, and that national policies such as ‘right-to-buy’ depletes housing stock; meaning less revenue generated for the HRA to better deal with issues related to housing repairs;
 - (8) believes it is outrageous that the last Decent Homes Standard was set in 2006 (with five Conservative prime ministers since then) and that the current government must deliver their long awaited Decent Homes Standard for all social rented and private rented homes; and
 - (9) commits to working with all of the city’s MPs in challenging government to bring forward this legislation;
2. the addition of the following sub-paragraphs under paragraph (e):-
 - (4) an external review of Housing Repairs as part of the wider Housing Service review taking place next year, with the goal of fundamentally re-organising how the service is delivered, believing that the Council must do better in learning from other cities who are dealing with comparable problems, and ensure that best practice is being adopted throughout all housing services, including repairs; and

- (5) adopting Selective Licensing schemes throughout the city, noting that issues in private sector housing have a considerable impact on social housing with badly maintained neighbourhoods leading to even greater pressure on council housing repairs, and believing that the city's neighbourhoods are being let down by rogue private landlords; and
3. the addition of a new paragraph (f) as follows:-
- (f) affirms that the Council must ultimately provide a service which is geared around the needs of tenants and delivers for all of the city's neighbourhoods.
2. Amendment to be moved by Councillor Douglas Johnson, seconded by Councillor Martin Phipps

That the Motion now submitted be amended by the deletion of paragraphs (d) and (e) and the addition of new paragraphs (d) to (g) as follows:-

- (d) notes that the Housing Policy Committee has been working cross-party to monitor progress on repairs handling and will continue to do so;
- (e) notes in particular that at its meeting on Thursday 15th December, the Committee will receive a report on the Council's actions on damp and mould, annexed to which is a letter to the Government setting out our actions and emphasising the need for government to fund significant action on this serious health risk;
- (f) believes that the political choice of austerity has limited this Council's ability to inspect a significant proportion of private rented properties; and
- (g) endorses this Council's request to the Government for additional resources to support an expansion of this particularly important agenda.

ITEM OF BUSINESS NO. 8 – NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING “ADOPTING THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP (APPG) ON BRITISH MUSLIMS’ DEFINITION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA”

3. Amendment to be moved by Councillor Cliff Woodcraft, seconded by Councillor Ann Woolhouse

That the Motion now submitted be amended by the addition of new paragraphs (b) to (d) as follows, and the relettering of original paragraphs (b) to (i) as new paragraphs (e) to (l):-

- (b) notes that this country is comprised of many different ethnic groups who have joined over the centuries, that our country has rightly welcomed those who have faced persecution in their home country, and notes with pride Sheffield's role in becoming the first city of sanctuary;
- (c) welcomes the contribution at all levels of society made by immigrant communities and those born here, and regrets that prejudice holds back the contribution that they make to our society;
- (d) reaffirms that discrimination based on ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation and other protected characteristics has no place in our society;

ITEM OF BUSINESS NO. 9 – NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING “MOVING TOWARDS AN ETHICAL DEBT COLLECTION POLICY AND ENDING THE USE OF BAILIFFS”

4. Amendment to be moved by Councillor Minesh Parekh, seconded by Councillor Bryan Lodge

That the Motion now submitted be amended by the addition of new paragraphs (n) to (r) as follows, and the re-lettering of existing paragraph (n) as a new paragraph (s):-

- (n) believes that identifying issues early is of primary importance, and notes that a report on the review of the Council's debt management policy will be the subject of a report to the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee in the new year;
- (o) notes the work of the Council's cross-party Cost of Living Crisis Group, and the dedicated work of council employees in supporting residents through financial hardship, and believes that debt collection and the use of bailiffs, and its implications, need to be considered by this Group in investigating the adoption of an ethical debt collection service;
- (p) notes recent research from Martin Lewis's Money and Mental Health Policy Institute which found that 15% of people with mental health problems had missed at least three payments on one council tax bill, compared to 4% of people without a mental health problem;
- (q) believes that it is important to make the distinction between those who can't pay debt, and those who won't, when using bailiffs and that targeted support is essential as well as a compassionate understanding of each individual's circumstances, be that financial, social or health related;
- (r) believes that in the private rented housing sector, some tenants are at the mercy of rogue landlords and exorbitant rents, trapping people into a spiral of debt;

5. Amendment to be moved by Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed, seconded by Councillor Sue Auckland

That the Motion now submitted be amended by:-

1. the deletion, in paragraph (a), of the words “alongside a crisis in global capitalism”;
2. the addition of new paragraphs (m) and (n) as follows and the relettering of original paragraphs (m) and (n) as new paragraphs (o) and (p):-
 - (m) notes that the Council has agreed to continue providing the Citizens Advice Bureau with grant money of £827k per year, and notes that Citizens Advice is currently not providing face to face support in most areas of Sheffield;
 - (n) welcomes the good work that Local Area Committees are doing to re-establish face to face advice services, and believes that providing face to face support is crucial to helping residents facing complex debt issues;
3. the substitution, in the new paragraph (o) [original paragraph (m)], of the words “reducing the Council’s use of bailiffs over time”, for the words “ending debt collections practices such as bailiff use”;
4. the substitution, in the new paragraph (p) [original paragraph (n)], of the words “Reducing the Council’s use of Bailiffs over time”, for the words “Ending bailiff use”; and
5. the addition, in the new paragraph (p) [original paragraph (n)], of new bullet points as follows:-
 - Creating a targeted approach to tax collection, as has been trialled in Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Councils, to identify residents who are genuinely struggling to pay their debts versus those who have the ability to pay
 - Working closely with mental health services to provide additional assistance to people with mental health needs who are in council tax arrears
 - Working with the Citizens Advice Bureau to re-establish self-referral and face to face support for complex debt
 - Fully implementing the Stop the Knock campaign’s “Six Steps for Local Authorities”, which consist of:-
 - (i) making a clear public commitment to reduce the Council’s use of bailiffs over time;

- (ii) reviewing the Council's signposting to free debt advice, including phone/online channels;
- (iii) adopting the Standard Financial Statement to objectively assess affordability;
- (iv) putting in place a formal policy covering residents in vulnerable circumstances;
- (v) exempting Council Tax Support recipients from bailiff action; and
- (vi) signing the Council Tax Protocol and reviewing the Authority's current practice against the 'Supportive Council Tax Recovery' toolkit.

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