

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING – 2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2022

### RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE MEETING

#### **1. DEBATE ON A PETITION REQUESTING THE COUNCIL TO REPAIR, NOT DEMOLISH, ROSE GARDEN CAFÉ, GRAVES PARK**

RESOLVED: That this Council refers the petition to the Charity Trustee Sub-Committee for consideration, in recognition that the Sub-Committee is to meet to consider the future of the Café Building upon receipt of the reports of the detailed survey work being undertaken and of guidance from the Charity Commission on options in relation to the future of the Building, and acknowledging that, subsequently, either or both of the Finance Sub-Committee and the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee may also have a decision-making role in relation to the future of the Building.

#### **2. A RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY FOR SHEFFIELD**

RESOLVED:

That this Council believes:-

- (a) that, if Sheffield is to play its part in achieving the Paris Climate targets, meet its net zero target by 2030 and address the cost of living crisis, we need to reduce energy demand through energy efficiency measures such as retrofitting homes and other buildings; and to significantly raise the amount of energy we produce from renewable sources;
- (b) having more of our energy produced from renewable sources helps us control costs by having secure forms of energy generated locally; energy security means that the UK is less at the mercy of dubious and undemocratic regimes with poor human rights records that are often the suppliers of fossil fuels;

That this Council:-

- (c) believes that the Co-operative Party's plan for community-owned energy, which sets out how the Government can scale up community-owned energy - including through establishing a new National Community Energy fund and developing a National Community Energy Strategy - would give local people control over renewable production and deliver energy sovereignty for our communities;

- (d) believes that, as part of the on-going development of the Ethical Procurement Policy and Community Wealth Building Charter, the Council must work to remove procurement barriers to producers selling their energy locally, and believes allowing councils to prioritise community-owned projects in procurement and planning would level the playing-field between community-owned energy and privately-owned giants;
- (e) believes that the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority's Energy Strategy is right to set ambitions to double the number of community energy organisations in South Yorkshire by 2040, and produce 100kW of community energy per year by 2030;
- (f) believes that the Council must continue working alongside Sheffield MPs to put pressure on the Government to deliver the Local Electricity Bill, in order to deliver more clean, local energy that benefits local communities;
- (g) supports the £3.5m of capital investment put forward through the Labour Group's budget amendment approved in March 2022 - to decarbonise community buildings, install renewable energy infrastructure, and enact energy efficiency measures – and believes this shows the Council's ambition to deliver Clean Growth and to help Sheffield through the cost-of-living crisis;
- (h) notes that Sheffield generates more renewable energy than other comparable cities, but has relatively low levels of solar, wind and hydroelectricity; and believes, therefore, this investment is key to creating jobs and reducing emissions from the Council's 38,000 homes and 4,000 land and property assets including community buildings;
- (i) notes that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee recently approved £13.24 million to improve insulation on 117 'Airey' properties and £10.42 million to install external wall and roof insulation to 255 Council homes; and

That this Council resolves:-

- (j) to ask the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee to consider:-
  - (i) **conducting an audit of the potential for renewable energy installations** and energy efficiency measures on all Council land and property, draw up a priority list for installations based on the most potential to save energy and generate clean energy, ensuring that this is considered as part of the on-going Community Asset Plan, and present it to the Committee within 6 months;
  - (ii) **installing solar photovoltaics on all new build Council-owned buildings** where technically feasible, recognising that integrated roof systems are cheaper to install than retrofitting solar systems after construction;
  - (iii) **creating a Local Area Energy Plan for Sheffield** that has the buy-in of the wider community and lead a local area energy planning process that involves both the network operators and other key stakeholders, including

developers, energy experts and community energy groups - with each Local Area Committee (LAC) involved and maximising the 'tool kit for engagement' in the development of Local Area Energy Plans;

- (iv) **investigating establishing strategic partnerships with renewable and energy efficiency installers** to help ensure certainty on cost and delivery of measures and report back to the Committee within 6 months;
- (v) **encouraging the establishment of partnerships with local Community Renewables organisations** to enable low cost/no cost installations funded through citizens' investments;
- (vi) **maximising external funding to finance installations** using Government, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and any ethical sources;
- (vii) **using funding available for solar installations from Cooperatives** on Council buildings and encouraging take up of this funding by large commercial organisations;
- (viii) **working with the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to address procurement barriers** to support community energy installations on Council buildings through the development of Sheffield's Ethical Procurement Policies and Community Wealth Building Charter;
- (ix) **encouraging wider community investment in local renewable energy projects** through a range of measures including, but not limited to, Community Share Offers and Municipal Bonds;
- (x) working alongside the Housing Policy Committee to develop a **compelling offer for private householders and landlords** to support the installation of solar photovoltaics and high cost energy efficiency measures;
- (xi) **encouraging best practice in Planning** to support renewable energy installations by developers and to create a low carbon energy supply;
- (xii) **encouraging renewable and energy efficiency skills** by establishing links and relationships between our partners in the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency sectors with appropriate local training and education providers;
- (xiii) working alongside the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee to ensure **training opportunities and new skills are included in all projects** and that contracts related to energy efficiency and renewables should include commitments from contractors on providing training opportunities and new skills for local people; and
- (xiv) requiring new energy generation projects of 5MW or above to have at least 20% **local ownership**.

### **3. COMMITTING THE COUNCIL TO TACKLING THE STIGMA OF MENOPAUSE AND PERIOD POVERTY**

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes there are more than 13 million women currently experiencing menopause or perimenopause in the UK; and that menopause campaigners argue that medical sexism and a lack of training means many women are left to suffer the symptoms of menopause;
- (b) recognises that menopause is a society and family issue, not just a women's issue;
- (c) notes that women over the age of 50 are the fastest growing segment of the workforce, and most will go through the menopause transition during their working lives, and many won't be able to meet their full potential at work unless they get the right support from their employer;
- (d) believes the UK could be losing 14 million workdays a year related to the menopause, according to recent research by Censuswide, with one in four women who experience menopausal symptoms, many at the top of their career, considering leaving their job;
- (e) reaffirms the Council has a legal duty to ensure that employees do not face discrimination;
- (f) believes employers who support women through the menopause will reap the benefits in terms of increased engagement and loyalty, as well as lower sickness absence and employee turnover;
- (g) believes fostering age and gender inclusive workplaces can help the Council to tap into the valuable skills and talent this fast-growing segment of the workforce has to offer;
- (h) believes this is an important issue that the Council has a role in addressing and that its currently getting worse due to the cost-of-living crisis;
- (i) recognises that women are a significant element in the City's economy and are vital to helping families through the cost-of-living crisis, but cannot if they are too ill to work;
- (j) notes removing barriers to progression for women could help the Council close its gender pay gap, and believes supporting women through menopause will help mitigate ageism in the workplace;
- (k) recognises the valuable contribution of Carolyn Harris MP (co-chair of the Menopause Task Force), the GMB, Unite, USDAW, Community Union and others who lead the way on this issue;

- (l) believes the Government is failing to ensure the country is period poverty free by 2025;
- (m) notes with alarm that amidst the worst cost of living crisis in 40 years, a poll of 1,000 UK girls aged 14-21 reveals over 1 in 4 are struggling to afford period products and nearly 1 in 5 report being unable to afford them;
- (n) believes, as a result, period poverty is a serious issue for women in the city which disproportionately affects groups who already face barriers accessing support, including ethnic minority groups, refugees and asylum seekers, people with disability, young carers and young people in care, creating indignity and a significant mental health burden through stigma;
- (o) recognises that period poverty goes hand in hand with food poverty and cuts across different policy areas, requiring a holistic, cross cutting commitment and intervention;
- (p) notes that the Labour Party's work on religious and sex education in schools has moved us further along in terms of awareness, but proposes more needs to be done;
- (q) notes that period poverty is a particular problem in the asylum system, for those who receive under £40 a week in state support (Bloody Good Period/Women for Refugee Women, 2019);
- (r) notes that under the Period Products (Free Provision) Scotland Bill, the Scottish Government has set up a Scotland-wide scheme to allow anyone who needs period products to get them free of charge, and gives the Scottish Government the power to make public bodies including schools, colleges and universities, provide period products for free (Scottish Parliament, 2021);
- (s) notes that as part of the Welsh Government's Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan, funding has been provided to local authorities and Further Education institutions to ensure that period products can be accessed free of charge by learners in schools, Further Education institutions and to those in need in communities (Welsh Government, 2021);
- (t) believes that everyone who requires period products should be able to access them for free;
- (u) believes that a person's period should not prevent them from succeeding in life;
- (v) calls on the Chief Executive to report to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, within the next three months, on plans to incorporate the GMB Menopause Smash the Stigma Workplace Policy, including the following:-
  - (i) preventing women being disadvantaged at work because of their symptoms and because of the stigma of discussing menopause at work;

- (ii) adopting a supportive workplace model which includes manager and staff training on issues around menopause, including through the GMB, to all members of staff in work time over a 12-month period;
  - (iii) adopting a more progressive and inclusive approach to supporting those who experience menopause;
  - (iv) to make Sheffield a period aware city, looking at how period poverty, shame and inequality can be addressed across the Council's areas of work and developing a "Period Equality Charter" outlining what this means for different policy areas;
  - (v) looking at period poverty as part of the cost-of-living crisis, exploring ways to supply free period products, calling on schools to join the Government's free period products scheme and promote the scheme to pupils;
  - (vi) exploring what efforts the Council may be able to undertake to support and coordinate existing efforts and donations of period products to increase their impact and integrating efforts into the cost of living response;
  - (vii) calling on the Government to fund provision of free period products in all public buildings;
  - (viii) consider adopting a relevant HR policy as a council, e.g. menstrual leave policy, and to encourage other local businesses and organisations to make the same commitments; and
  - (ix) ensuring that at future corporate-level collective bargaining negotiations, provisions are made to accept and integrate the recommendations of the GMB Smash the Stigma Workplace Policy into Council policy and procedures; and
- (w) also calls on the Chief Executive to report to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, within the next three months, to:-
- (i) examine the feasibility of providing free period products in public toilets and other public buildings, including the Town Hall and community centres, including exploring whether any free disposable or reusable period products provided by the Council can be sustainably sourced;
  - (ii) publicise the provision of free period products and reusable period products, such as moon cups, through Council communication channels; and
  - (iii) write to the Minister for Women and Equalities, calling on the UK government to make period products free and available to all who need them across England, as has been done in Scotland and Wales.

#### 4. BEST VALUE SERVICES FOR THE PEOPLE OF SHEFFIELD

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) believes that it is this Council's duty to seek best value for the people of Sheffield, especially given the current financial challenges faced by the Council;
- (b) believes the people of Sheffield want to see services delivered efficiently, effectively, responsibly, equitably and ethically;
- (c) notes that a Labour Government introduced Best Value in the Local Government Act of 1999 stating it was to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way an authority exercises its functions, having regard to a combination of factors, including economy, efficiency and effectiveness"; further notes that the world has moved on since 1999, and whilst it is still important to have "regard to a combination of factors, including economy, efficiency and effectiveness", believes that equity, the environment and social implications must also be factored into every local government decision;
- (d) believes that the principles set out in the Local Government Act of 1999 could have been better fulfilled by this Council in a number of circumstances, for example:-
  - (i) the Housing Repairs Service, where there have been dramatic increases in the waiting list for repairs over the last few years, increasing to over 5,000 currently, with an average waiting time of over 21 days;
  - (ii) the average amount of time houses are left empty for, after residents move out, in recent years has increased to 12 weeks, far above the target of six weeks; and
  - (iii) youth services which has failed to deliver as the people of Sheffield would want and need, despite additional funding of £2m in both 2020/21 and 2021/22, none of which was spent on youth service delivery;
- (e) notes that despite the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee twice recommending the decision on youth services to be revisited in 2020, the second time unanimously, Cabinet, on further consideration, progressed the decision;
- (f) notes that to achieve best value, in common with many other local authorities, Sheffield City Council (SCC) has considered in-sourcing services where external providers were not delivering effectively in recent years and has in-sourced housing repairs and youth services;
- (g) believes that while in-sourcing requires a process of continuous improvement and is not an end in itself, the Council is better able to manage and monitor performance and deliver improvement in the services that have been in-sourced, and, by way of example:-

- (i) notes the housing repairs service, while affected by difficulties including Covid-19, rising costs and skill shortages, is making headway in reducing the repairs backlog and the management of vacant properties, and new in-house, online reporting systems will accelerate this improvement;
- (ii) further integration of the housing repairs service with SCC's Housing function should result in an improved customer experience for Council tenants;
- (iii) in-sourced Youth Services are reducing management costs and redesigning the service to focus on frontline delivery of universal youth and play services in communities across the city, involving the training and development of new youth and play workers, professions that have been devastated by years of austerity that began in 2010 with the coalition government;
- (iv) notes that since the youth services contract was not renewed in October 2020, and the service came back to the Council, there have been significant improvements to youth services; however, this must be put in the context that the service was brought back in the middle of the Covid Pandemic and, therefore, was unable to spend all of the £2 million on youth service provision (noting that the National Youth Agency only gave Green COVID guidance in July 2021, meaning activities could only return to normal following over a year of closure), and notes that the money was therefore spent on laptops for school children who required them to access education, and believes this was essential for those most at risk of safeguarding concerns / isolation;
- (v) notes the expanded youth service sessions, ensuring that at least one session of youth work, either in a club or detached, is being delivered in every ward - achieved against a backdrop of Sheffield not having an active Youth Workforce due to a decade of financial cuts nationally to youth services;
- (vi) notes that the Council is now ready to give grants to VCF partners across the city to deliver in partnership with the Council, ensuring that by the end of the financial year there will be a minimum of 3 sessions in every ward across the city;
- (vii) notes that capturing what young people and local communities are telling us they want and need is at the heart of the changes; and
- (viii) notes that staff brought in-house to the Council generally enjoy favourable terms and conditions, employee support schemes, and with investment in resources, training and youth buildings, staff will have an improved working environment from which to deliver modern, contemporary youth services that are inclusive and meet the needs and aspirations of young people;



- (h) believes that for decisions to progress with service changes that involve staff transfers, much more consideration needs to be given to the impact for the workforce and employer arising from the transfer of employment;
- (i) believes that Policy Committees are best placed to determine which of their areas should be prioritised to demand continuous improvement in both delivery and financial performance; and
- (j) therefore believes that this Council should look to implement the following:-
  - (i) examine where other councils have adopted different models for service provision and look at comparative performance;
  - (ii) establishment of internal service providers with the relevant council function being the budget holders;
  - (iii) benchmarking of services with other providers, no matter which area they operate in; and
  - (iv) clear, unambiguous performance measures which demonstrate ongoing improvement in service delivery.

## **5. COST OF LIVING CRISIS – NATIONAL FAILINGS AND OUR LOCAL RESPONSE**

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes that inflation is at over 10%, with Britain the only G7 economy where inflation has hit double digits;
- (b) believes that the Government's reckless mini-budget has crashed the economy, and though the Prime Minister and Chancellor may have again changed, the damage has already been dealt;
- (c) notes that the unfunded tax cuts caused financial disaster – with spiralling interest on government bonds, and crashing the pound to its weakest ever position against the dollar;
- (d) notes that the effect of this has been soaring mortgage repayment costs, higher inflation and widespread economic turmoil, further compounding the current cost-of-living crisis;
- (e) rejects any return to discredited austerity policies by the Government under the guise of "tough choices", believing that it is a self-defeating policy which does nothing to help the UK's finances and serves only to redistribute wealth from the poor to the rich;

- (f) notes that in response to the crisis of their own making, the Government have now reneged on plans to provide a two-year cap on the cost of energy units, and have slashed this guaranteed support to 6 months instead;
- (g) believes that as this Government attempt to balance the country's finances following their complete and utter mismanagement of the economy, the burden for this must not fall on Sheffield residents or cash-strapped public services;
- (h) notes that the Council is already facing its worse ever budget position – caused by inflation, unprecedented energy costs and twelve preceding years of government cuts, meaning that there is now very little flexibility for the Council to make additional savings;
- (i) notes that Sheffield Council will have lost around £300 million from its budget, in real terms, since 2010 – around a third of the Council's entire budget – making it even harder for the organisation to support the city's residents during the cost-of-living crisis;
- (j) notes, however, that despite the financial difficulties, this Council is doing everything it can to support residents through this crisis, with the Council creating a package of support to provide all available guidance (financial, fuel, food) for anyone facing hardship;
- (k) notes that alongside partners in Voluntary Action Sheffield and numerous VCFS organisations, the Council has created a network of 'Welcome Places' which will provide convenient spaces for people to access help or just call in to get warm, have a cup of tea and a chat, in their local communities;
- (l) believes that Sheffield's warm and welcoming places should harness everything great about the support that exists in the city, providing places for people to socialise, undertake activities, share advice, learn and support each other;
- (m) notes that the Council has formed a cost-of-living steering group, chaired by the Council Leader, and believes that as an organisation we must work on the crisis with the same resolve and collective spirit as was needed throughout the pandemic;
- (n) supports the Labour Party's plan to take real action now to tackle the Government's cost of living crisis:-
  - (i) cut VAT on home energy bills;
  - (ii) save on energy bills now and in the longer term by insulating millions of homes;
  - (iii) cut small business rates and support businesses through the cost of living storm;
  - (iv) buy, make and sell more in Britain to create well-paid, secure jobs in every community; and

- (v) establish a state-owned energy company – Great British Energy – charged with investing in and running green energy projects across the country, leading to clean growth and lower energy bills;
- (o) supports policies that:-
  - (i) restore the cap on bankers’ bonuses;
  - (ii) restore the Energy Price Cap to the October 2021 level, saving many households more than £2,000/year, financed by a windfall tax on energy producers; and
  - (iii) re-nationalise the UK’s energy providers;
- (p) calls on the Government to finally provide sufficient financial support for households, businesses and local authorities to ensure that people in Sheffield get the support they need through this ongoing crisis that this Council believes is of their making; and
- (q) believes that whilst the Government is not providing any funding to do what is really needed to support people fully, or to provide the public services we should expect, it is important that the Council helps to lead the co-ordinated efforts across the city to support residents through this ongoing crisis.

## **6. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES**

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) approves the boundary changes to polling districts and proposed polling places outlined in the report of the Chief Executive; and
- (b) delegates authority to the Returning Officer to make amendments to polling places and stations where a change must be made during an election period.

## **7. CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL’S CONSTITUTION**

RESOLVED: That this Council approves the changes to the various Parts of the Constitution, as outlined in sections 3.1 to 3.4 of the report of the Director of Legal and Governance and as set out in appendices B to G.

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