

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – 5TH JULY 2023

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE MEETING

1. A BETTER, BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR SHEFFIELD

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) thanks the voters of Sheffield for turning out at the May 2023 elections and taking part in the democratic exercise of their vote;
- (b) notes the hugely positive recent developments in our city, including:-
 - (i) the exciting proposals for the Cole Brothers building;
 - (ii) the ongoing progress with the Heart of the City developments; improvements to Fargate; pedestrianisation of Division Street and the planning permission to transform Castlegate;
 - (iii) over £100m to be invested in Sheffield's leisure and entertainment venues;
 - (iv) the development agreement for Attercliffe Waterside which will see the creation of a new low-carbon neighbourhood with 1000 homes;
 - (v) the creation of the Sheffield Policy Campus which will further develop Sheffield as a leading centre for policy making in Britain; and
 - (vi) the two fantastic promotions for Sheffield United and Sheffield Wednesday;
- (c) notes new developments that will help to improve the lives of people in Sheffield:-
 - (i) the launch of Family Hubs, one-stop shops supporting families, children and young people to have the best start in life; and
 - (ii) Sheffield being chosen to be part of a new five-year project which will support early intervention work to prevent homelessness;
- (d) believes however, that the above developments will only be successful if they are subject to robust scrutiny;
- (e) restates the findings from the Lowcock Inquiry which states that during the street tree dispute a 'bunker mentality' developed within the Council, with a culture that was 'unreceptive to external views [...] and prone to group think';

- (f) believes that within the Council Chamber, the role of elected members is not only to 'talk Sheffield up' but to act as a 'critical friend' to officers, external partners, and each other, to ensure better, more well-rounded decisions are made;
- (g) believes that:-
- (i) Sheffield is changing for the better and will continue getting better still; and
 - (ii) it is time to talk Sheffield up – not talk it down;
- (h) further believes that:-
- (i) the Council's Future Sheffield programme will deliver a modern council with a culture founded on trust and openness, with greater connection to our communities, where staff are engaged and where equality and diversity are celebrated; and
 - (ii) the City Goals is a great initiative that will provide a set of goals, shaped by residents, and shared with our partners, that will guide the future of Sheffield;
- (i) resolves to:-
- (i) serve the people of Sheffield;
 - (ii) work collaboratively through our committees and with our partners to continue to:-
 - (A) help people with the cost-of-living crisis;
 - (B) fix our public transport and make it easier to get around our city;
 - (C) secure new investment in the city;
 - (D) ensure that public money is always spent wisely;
 - (E) invest in our neighbourhoods and devolve power to communities;
 - (F) tackle the climate emergency; and
 - (G) ensure that politics in Sheffield is conducted in a competent, open and inclusive way; and
 - (iii) always be guided by our values: people are at the heart of what we do; openness and honesty are important to us, and together we get things done; and
- (j) believes that our city is best served with all parties co-operating under No Overall Control, where councillors from all groups have to work together in the modern committee system in Sheffield's best interests.

2. RESPONDING TO THE CHANGING SHAPE OF THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS LOCALLY

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) praises the cross party response to the Cost of Living crisis, which has delivered 173 welcome places, £15m in hardship payments to residents, and support for affected businesses;
- (b) notes with concern that despite the Council's interventions, the Cost of Living crisis is now impacting a much larger group of people, as:-
 - (i) Council Homeless Services received 500 more presentations in 2022/23 than in 2021/22;
 - (ii) the Trussell Trust delivered 28% more food parcels across Yorkshire in 2022/23 than in 2021/22, with 27 Trussell Trust and Independent food banks in Sheffield;
 - (iii) nationally, food prices have risen by 18.4% since January; and
 - (iv) the recent rise in the Bank Base Rate to 5% will seriously impact many of Sheffield's low income mortgage holders and renters;
- (c) notes that:-
 - (i) research has found that an estimated £18.7bn in benefits and social tariffs go unclaimed across the UK every year;
 - (ii) similarly, an estimated £17m of Pension Credit goes unclaimed in Sheffield every year;
 - (iii) take-up is lower for locally administered benefits such as Council Tax Support than DWP administered benefits; and
 - (iv) Sheffield Citizens Advice Bureau (which provides support to maximise household income) has provided primarily online support since the pandemic, which can be challenging to access for residents who are elderly or facing digital exclusion or who speak English as a second language;
- (d) (i) believes that accessing locally administered benefits in Sheffield is made more difficult due to the many barriers residents face in contacting the Council, and reaffirms that the Council has an utmost responsibility to assist residents to access *all* the benefits and support they are entitled to and (ii) notes that at the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on 31st May 2023, councillors agreed that developing a new Customer Services strategy, that will be focused on the experience that the people of Sheffield have when accessing our services, is a key priority for the Committee;

- (e) recalls that this Council passed a motion in June 2022, not just requesting the establishment of the Cost of Living Crisis Working Group but also requiring a “Customer Services Improvement Plan to be in place within 4 months, to show how it will aim to improve response times and accessibility to services, regardless of the community that customers come from or their background, language or disability; and recognising that the Council’s services also need to be available to people without access to the phone or internet”;
- (f) therefore asks the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider and report on a Customer Services Improvement Plan at the earliest opportunity;
- (g) believes that timely access to independent advice on civil rights and obligations is fundamental and necessary in a fair society, whilst recognising that this does not relieve public authorities of their duty to carry out their services effectively and fairly;
- (h) notes that the Local Area Committees have been a vital part of the Cost of Living response in their localities, including working closely with Welcome Places, providing grants to Voluntary, Community and Faith organisations, and producing locally tailored communications;
- (i) therefore, requests that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee considers allocating from unallocated resources from the 2023/24 budget setting process:-
 - (i) £200k in additional grant funding to Citizens Advice Services, to expand their employment of Volunteer Trainers and provide increased face to face support; and
 - (ii) £400k in additional citywide LAC funding, to be allocated by Indices of Multiple Deprivation and spent on the response to the Cost of Living crisis; and
- (j)
 - (i) notes the important work of the cross-party and cross-sector Cost-of-Living Strategy Group and the expertise and front-line experience that this Group has;
 - (ii) notes the belief shared by the Strategic Group that a long-term strategic approach to preventing and reducing poverty and inequality in Sheffield is needed;
 - (iii) therefore, believes that any decisions to allocate additional funding to reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis should be made after consultation with that Group; and
 - (iv) believes that Local Area Committee funding needs to be put on a sustainable footing and calls for a fundamental review of LAC funding.

3. REAFFIRMING SHEFFIELD AS A CITY OF SANCTUARY

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

(a) notes that:-

- (i) Sheffield, the UK's first City of Sanctuary, has a proud history of welcoming people seeking safety;
- (ii) the climate crisis increases the risk of displacing people, as climate change is a contributing and exacerbating factor in migration and conflict;
- (iii) the Illegal Migration Bill in Parliament has already been voted through by the majority of the House of Commons;
- (iv) people seeking safety, including children, will be effectively detained in camps, barges, large-scale institutional accommodation, containment sites; segregated from communities, and denied support and threatened with removal to Rwanda;
- (v) a pledge to 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' has received national support by Labour, the Green Party, and the Liberal Democrats; and
- (vi) Sheffield City Council is the regulator for residential property in the City, including Home Office accommodation and that suitable education is provided;

(b) believes that:-

- (i) everyone's claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly;
- (ii) the Government's anti-refugee laws deny internationally recognised rights and will create ever-longer delays in the asylum process;
- (iii) the UK needs an asylum system that empowers people seeking safety to rebuild their lives, not segregated but housed as our neighbours, enabling communities to welcome them; and
- (iv) the Illegal Migration Bill punishes people and will effectively destroy the right to seek safety in the UK; and

(c) resolves to:-

- (i) sign the 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' pledge and join the "Lift the Ban" coalition;
- (ii) use our powers to ensure migrants do not suffer lengthy stays in temporary, sub-standard or far-distant accommodation;

- (iii) ask the Chief Executive to make representations to HM Government expressing this Council's deep concern about the impact of the new housing regulations¹;
- (iv) request that the Housing Policy Committee considers adding to its work programme an item on Council powers and resources to protect migrants from discriminatory housing regulations, upholding locally defined standards and inspection processes;
- (v) call on the Government to withdraw the UK-Rwanda agreement, repeal the Nationality and Borders Act and Illegal Migration Bill;
- (vi) call on the Government to recognise the impact of climate change as a legitimate reason to seek safety;
- (vii) reaffirm our status as a City of Sanctuary, and work with the Local Authorities of Sanctuary network to ensure we are meeting the accreditation criteria;
- (viii) call on the Government to set a clear target for processing future asylum claims;
- (ix) call on the Government to ensure that families who have children settled in schools are no longer required to move accommodation;
- (x) investigate ways to fund advice to asylum seekers which was previously delivered by the Sheffield Law Centre;
- (xi) work in partnership with organisations and people with lived experience of the asylum system to identify strategies for mitigating the adverse effects of government policies within Sheffield;
- (xii) introduce a Councillor 'Migrant Champion' who would:-
 - (A) be a point of contact for migrants, community groups and organisations to raise concerns;
 - (B) seek to ensure council services are open and available to migrants who need them; and
 - (C) seek to make sure the needs of vulnerable migrants are met; and
- (xiii) requests that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee considers adding to its work programme consideration of the Council's relationship with the Home Office and immigration enforcement, and an assessment of its current practices and the impact of the Hostile Environment policy on inclusion, equality and cohesion in Sheffield.

¹ *Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Amendment) (England) Order 2022, (SI 521/2022), as amended by the 2023 order which extends the effect of the Regulations until 1 June 2024.*

4. MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF HOUSING GROWTH

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) recognises that housing growth must be supported by sufficient investment in infrastructure and services, including transport, education, active travel improvements and public spaces;
- (b) believes the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a crucial tool that the Council has at its disposal to achieve this objective; and
- (c) therefore, invites:-
 - (i) Local Area Committees (LACs) to feature an item on every meeting agenda on the spending of Neighbourhood CIL monies so that we have proper political accountability;
 - (ii) LACs to oversee the establishment of inter-ward collaboration between wards; and
 - (iii) the Governance Committee to satisfy itself that Members receive sufficient training regarding CIL so they understand how to make best use of the funding available.

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