

Strategy and Resources Policy Committee

Meeting held 5 July 2022

**PRESENT:** Councillors Terry Fox (Chair), Julie Grocutt (Deputy Chair), Angela Argenzio, Douglas Johnson (Group Spokesperson), Shaffaq Mohammed (Group Spokesperson), Joe Otten, Mick Rooney, Martin Smith, Richard Williams and Paul Wood

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 An apology was received from Councillor Bryan Lodge.

**2. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 Councillor Julie Grocutt wished to state for openness and transparency that she had been involved with residents regarding Clough Dike item stated on the forward plan.

**4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

4.1 Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be a true record.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

5.1 Ibrar Hussain submitted an electronic petition containing 63+ signatures, requesting a surcharge for taxis in Sheffield due to the rising fuel prices and cost of living.

5.2 A verbal response was provided from Councillor Joe Otten who stated that a proposal was being worked on surrounding the surcharge and recommended for the petitioner/s to provide some calculations on a proposed surcharge to be considered.

5.3 Nigel Slack attended the Committee and asked the following question which was answered by the Chair:

5.4 Q: I have asked many questions of Council over the last 12 years and have always tried to pitch these in a positive and helpful way. This is therefore one of the most difficult questions I have ever laid before you.

Recent events around the actions and the disciplinary disposition of

the Chief Executive of this Council have been deeply troubling to colleagues in the community and to many others.

The actions for which the Chief Exec was recently called to account drove a coach and horses through the Nolan Principles of Public Life. The fact that City Councillors and 'so-called' business leaders in the city were prepared to ignore those principles for the sake of expediency is a stain on the reputation of this city and of this Council.

There is an implicit precedent being set that the Nolan Principles are somehow malleable and can be ignored by any member of this Council, elected or employed in the right circumstances.

Adherence to the Principles should not be a matter of expediency, not a matter of what suits either the power brokers of the business world or the political leaders within the administration.

They are a definition of a moral way of working and behaving in public life and an ethical framework for this Council. Sheffield has now lost its moral compass.

We are all of us human and we all make mistakes but, the deliberate flouting of any one element of the Nolan Principles diminishes them all and, in choosing to be loyal to the diktat of the Cabinet Office rather than being honest and open with her current employer does not reflect well on her judgement or her loyalty to the city.

Questions need to be asked but the cloak of secrecy around the issues and the investigations in this matter make it almost impossible to get the answers needed. Rumours abound and are problematic and trust in the Council is once more being lost.

I do not see a way in which the Chief Exec can reclaim her integrity, her reputation or the city's trust and I believe her position will only become more and more untenable, unless there is greater transparency over the report and the disciplinary decision.

Will this Committee therefore reinforce this Council's commitment to the Nolan Principles as the ethical framework for the Council?

Will this Committee call on the Chief Exec to reconsider her position and take the step she should have taken in the first instance by resigning?

*A: Thank you for your question. The CEO has apologised publicly and has faced questions from the media, Members, staff and public. The council formed a Committee which followed a process that would in any other employment rights be followed. The Committee considered many issues, including the Nolan Principles and came to a decision which I respect and that is the decision of which I release my public*

*statement. The Committee was made up of experienced and senior Members of the council and I would like to take the opportunity to thank those Members. We will now move forwards and the CEO has stated to Members across the council that if they wish for a 1 to 1 meeting then she is happy to do this. I stand by my statement, the CEO's statement and our joint statement. Thank you very much for your question.*

5.5 Robin Hughes attended the Committee and asked the following questions which were answered by the Chair:

5.6 Q: This committee will consider a proposal to demolish the former John Lewis car park. This may seem premature, as the Council's application for a Certificate of Immunity from Listing has not yet been decided. It could be misunderstood as second-guessing that decision, even though it may be sensible to secure a budget. The claim that clearing a site attracts development is also questionable. Rushing to demolition has often left unsightly vacant plots for many years, for example Sheaf House, Dyson House and the Castle Market buildings.

The Council benefits from professional and expert officers, but years of savage cuts have depleted the resources available to assess historic and architectural significance. The very limited assessment of the John Lewis building is a recent illustration: the Council does not seem to have realised the significance of what it had. There are experts in the city, including the Council's own Conservation Advisory Group, ready to support officers on a voluntary basis and help to ensure that the city makes the most of its rich and varied historic environment.

Q1: If this committee approves the demolition proposal, will you require that any planning application or other preparation for demolition occurs only after the listing status of the building has been determined, and after there is a firm and financed proposal for whatever will replace it;

Q2: How best can local expert volunteers help the Council to assess the historic and architectural significance of assets in advance of proposals being made.

*A: No decision has been taken to demolish the John Lewis car park. At this stage the committee is being asked to consider an outline business case only to allocate funding to enable tendering, survey and feasibility work to be undertaken. A full business plan will be developed should the survey work identify that demolition is possible/feasible/desirable. The full business plan will be brought to committee for decision at this point.*

*If it is decided to proceed with demolition of the car park, a planning application will be submitted. In assessing the planning application,*

*consideration will be given to the buildings historic character, significance and setting drawing on expertise from the Council's conservation and urban design teams and consultation with any statutory consultees such as Historic England.*

*Thank you for the questions and we will note those points.*

5.7 Ruth Hubbard submitted the 5 questions in advance of the meeting but was not present at the meeting itself. The Chair stated that a written response would be provided to Ruth and highlighted that a response to Q4 may be out of time. The questions submitted were as follows:

5.8 Q1. Given the strategic and coordinating role of the Strategy and Resources Committee, what information or suggestions have been fed back so far from either policy committees, outside organisations (or the couple of LAC meetings there have been since the last report) to help flesh out the council's approach to the cost-of-living crisis. (I know the governance arrangements are new for everyone, so my question is about effective coordination, connections and avoiding silos in developing strategies and action plans)?

Q2. There is a lot in the report (and the previous one) by way of commentary, organisational arrangements, inputs and activities. There is less that brings clear strategic focus or ambition in terms of targets or outcomes (that would then help flesh out relevant activities and outputs, and the evidence, monitoring, and data that goes with these). Would it be helpful to identify clear outcomes or targets as a starting point, even if these are amended or shaped by others in an iterative process? At the moment things seem a little 'muddy' eg the risk analysis (and mitigations) is necessarily limited as it's not clear what it's analysing, and an EIA seems to still be in preparation so can't be integrated into targets or actions as yet. Or am I somehow reading the report wrong, or expecting too much at this stage?

Q3. Given the clear links with health (and mention of 'prevention'), has anyone suggested an outcome/target to at least maintain community health and wellbeing through the cost-of-living crisis? Or a potential target/outcome in relation to the council using its influence to support larger businesses in the city to identify and take appropriate cost of living crisis actions under things like corporate social responsibility policies?

Q4. An early test of council action on the cost-of-living crisis seems to be potentially unfolding in Hillsborough in relation to Tramlines. There has been an outcry from local (residents and) businesses - some of whom say they are right on the edge of crisis anyway - because Tramlines has decided to allow no-one who attends the festival to leave and re-enter the site. So whilst on-site (and likely over-priced) festival traders will benefit from a captive audience, local businesses

in Hillsborough say their trade will be decimated through the festival period and as people understandably avoid the whole area - Hillsborough businesses will not benefit from Tramlines. There is not even a guarantee that it will be Sheffield local businesses that are on site at Tramlines - Lidl, for example, is on the festival site, not a Sheffield or Hillsborough local grocer. So it appears that under pressure Hillsborough local businesses will suffer for the benefit of corporate profits (and the benefit and convenience of Tramlines?). Far from using the leverage that the council has through its interpretation of Licensing, and through the Safety Advisory Group (leverage that the cost of licensing strategy says will be used), the council appears to be backing Tramline's business decision and is doubling down (citing public safety but with no apparent evidence), instead of pursuing a win-win solution that includes supporting struggling local Hillsborough traders. Other cities, for example Portsmouth, have recognised the importance to local businesses of ensuring re-admissions to its Victorious music festival in the city. Will the council now make its cost-of-living strategy meaningful by taking immediate action to protect struggling Hillsborough local businesses and the impact of Tramlines?

Q5. The language of Gold and Silver Command seems to add nothing. It only sounds, unhelpfully, a little macho and, of course, also resurrects terms that were in use during the worst part of the street tree scandal. Can these be dropped?

5.9 Bridget Ingle submitted 1 question in advance of the meeting but was not present at the meeting itself. The Chair stated that a written response would be provided to Bridget.

5.10 Q1: 'Would the committee consider a street art project for the Barkers Pool car park prior to demolition?

Phlegm's 2019 Mausoleum of the Giants installation in the Eye Witness Works on Milton Street (prior to redevelopment) was phenomenally successful. It attracted 12,000 visitors who queued for up to 4 hours with people travelling from as far away as New York, Italy and Norway.

This pilot project could redefine how Sheffield City Council engages with its street artists by reducing graffiti tagging which is expensive to remove.

## **6. RETIREMENT OF STAFF**

6.1 The Executive Director, Resources submitted a report on Council staff retirements.

6.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Strategy and Resources Committee:-

- a) place on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the City Council by the members of staff in the Portfolios stated;

<b>City Futures</b>		
Alan Williams	Project Officer, Culture and Environment	32
Martin Wood	Asset Strategy and Performance Team Manager	37
<b>Operations</b>		
Simon Botterill	Service Manager - Transport Projects	41
Christopher Johnson	Service Manager - Projects and Commercial	44
Bernadette Kitching	Environmental Health Officer	42
David Woodhead	Joiner, Repairs and Maintenance Service	43
<b>People Services</b>		
Susan Billard	Primary School Assistant, Lydgate Junior School	24
Sandra Hope	Assistant Headteacher, Angram Bank Primary School	22
<b>Resources</b>		
Kath Greenwood	Personal Assistant to Director of Human Resources and Customer Services	21
Angela Hall	Trade Union Convenor	55

- b) extend to them its best wishes for the future and a long and happy retirement; and
- c) direct that an appropriate extract of the resolution now made, under the Common Seal of the Council, be forwarded to those staff with over 20 years' service.

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME**

7.1 The Chair introduced the item and asked the Committee if there were any questions surrounding the Work Programme detailed in the report. None were raised.

7.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Strategy and Resources Committee note that:-

1. With reference to issues raised in the report, consideration be given to any further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Appendix 3.
2. The committee's work programme as set out in Appendix 3 of the report be agreed.

3. Consideration be given to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in part 6 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme.

## **8. PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD**

- 8.1 The Director of Policy and Performance presented the report which set out an initial set of strategic priorities for Sheffield City Council that have been developed by the Chairs of the new policy committees and the leaders of the parties in the administration.

These outcomes will form the basis of the new Corporate Plan which will be developed by Members over the summer (in line with the timetable agreed by S&R Committee on 31st May 2022).

Having a single set of priorities will provide focus and purpose for the City Council for the medium-to-long term, setting the policy framework for what we want to achieve for Sheffielders and how budgets and annual plans contribute to achieving those longer term priorities.

A package of reports will be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to look at organisation performance. This would include a first draft of the Corporate Plan and form the basis for Policy Committee's to look at areas of improvement in more detail.

- 8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

1. Agree the initial set of strategic priorities for Sheffield City Council for the 2023/24 municipal year.
2. Note the ongoing work on the development of the Corporate Plan and agree that the strategic priorities should form the basis for this.
3. Note that a draft Corporate Plan will be brought forward for consideration by the Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 30 August 2022.

### **8.3 Reasons for Decision**

- 8.3.1 The recommendations are designed to ensure the council has a clear strategic direction and focus for the immediate period, as well as forming a solid foundation for the ongoing development of the Corporate Plan, a first draft of which is due to be considered by Strategy and Resources Committee on 30 August. By approving these priorities, the committee will also ensure that the work of the organisation is focused on those policies and activities that will help to deliver for the people and communities of Sheffield.

#### 8.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 8.4.1 No alternative options to the production of an initial set of strategic priorities was considered as it was agreed by Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting of 31 May 2022 that these should be developed and brought forward for consideration at this meeting.

### 9. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL ANALYSIS AND COMMITTEE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The Director of Finance and Commercial Services presented the report which provided the committee with an overview and set out the medium term financial position for the Council and proposed how individual Policy Committee budget targets for 2023/24 are set.

#### 9.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

1. Note, as a planning assumption, core Council Tax increases of 2% each year.
2. Note, as a planning assumption, Adult Social Care Precept increases of 1% each year.
3. Note, the three-year Government settlement was prior to the high inflation rates and lobby Central Government for additional financial support to offset the pressure caused.
4. Note, the Council's current level of reserves provides a limited amount of time for action to be taken strategically in response to the financial position;
5. Note, unless firm action is taken to contain pressures and deliver significant savings and/or mitigations, the Council's financial position will soon be unsustainable.
6. Note, an updated MTFA will be presented in October 2022 following identification of savings by Committees and refinement of pressures in the coming months. Any further action required will also be set out.
7. Approve that Policy Committees will be asked to develop savings / additional income options that cover their own pressures – in effect cash standstill.
8. Require Policy Committees to report at their meetings in September on how they can balance their budgets.
9. Note that a consolidated report based on the individual Policy Committee reports will be brought to the 12 October meeting of this Committee.



### 9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 9.3.1 The majority of the recommendations are asking Members to note the assumptions applied to, and the unsustainable financial position highlighted by, the medium-term financial analysis. The aim is to set out the scale of the challenge ahead, the limited resources and timescales in which to deliver change and some of the difficult decisions that will need to be taken.

The main decision for Members set out within the recommendations is the preferred approach to tackling the forecast budget gap for 2023/24. Policy Committees will be asked to develop savings / additional income options that cover their own pressures – in effect cash standstill.

This approach is deemed to Page 59 Page 16 of 33 be the most equitable and likely for ensuring a balanced budget is delivered for 2023/24.

### 9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 9.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balance budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.

## 10. **MONTH 2 BUDGET MONITORING AND 2021/2 OUT-TURN**

- 10.1 The Director of Finance and Commercial Services presented and spoke on the Outturn element of the report, which provided the outturn monitoring statement on the City Council's Revenue and Capital Budget Outturn as at the end of Month 12, 2021/22. The report also provided an update of the Council's Treasury Management activity in 2021/22 and set out expectations for the coming of the year.

### 10.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

1. Note the updated information and management actions provided by the report on the 2021/22 Revenue Budget Outturn as described in the report;
2. Approve carry forward requests for 2 items in the People portfolio
  - a. £700k underspend for Local Area Committees and
  - b. £972k unspent grant monies to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals.
3. Note the updated information and management actions provided by the report on the 2021/22 Capital Programme Monitoring as described in Appendix 1 of the report.
4. Note the annual Treasury Management Outturn report for 2021/22 as described in Appendix 2 of the report.

### 10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

10.3.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

#### 10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 Several alternative courses of action are considered as part of the process undertaken by Officers before decisions are recommended to Members. The recommendations made to Members represent what Officers believe to be the best options available to the Council, in line with Council priorities, given the constraints on funding and the use to which funding is put within the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

### 11. **COST OF LIVING CRISIS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

11.1 The Director of Policy and Performance presented the report which provided the Strategy and Resources Committee with an update on Sheffield's response to the cost-of-living crisis.

Following the decisions made at the S&R Committee meeting on 31st May 2022, incident-style response arrangements have been established with the first citywide Cost of Living (CoL) Crisis Strategy Group meeting on 23rd June.

The CoL Crisis Strategy Group developed a draft action plan for S&R Committee to consider which outlines the actions we are and will take as a city to support communities across Sheffield. This will continue to develop over the coming months based on evidence and insight from our Page 51 Agenda Item 12 communities about the support they need and to ensure we prepare as best we can for additional cost of living pressures in the winter.

Finally, the paper provided an outline of the Food Access Plan for Sheffield, which will focus on the themes of responding to immediate need, responding to underlying causes of food poverty and coordination and capacity building. The Food Access Plan will ultimately form part of the city's new Food Strategy (expected Sept 2022) but S&R Committee are asked to agree the outline focus and initial investments.

11.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

1. Notes the work that has been done to establish an incident response-type arrangement to help the city respond to the current situation and prepare for the forthcoming autumn and winter period, including the establishment of a strategic-level group chaired by the Leader of the Council and a tactical partner group led by a senior SCC officer.
2. Endorses the strategic aims, objectives, principles and draft action plan that have been developed in response to this work, as set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report which will be developed further in collaboration with partners.
3. Agrees the outline Food Access Plan and proposed funding allocations

as set out in paragraphs 21-24 and Appendix 3 of the report.

4. To the extent that further decisions reserved to this Committee will be required in order to finalise and implement the action plan, delegates authority to take those decisions to the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications, in consultation with the chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee following discussion with the Cost-of-Living Crisis strategic group.

### **11.3 Reasons for Decision**

- 11.3.1 The recommendations build on the commitments made by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 31st May to support Sheffielders through the cost of living crisis. Working with communities and partners across the city, the recommendations ensure that SCC will play a leading role through the strategic and tactical incident-type response.
- 11.3.2 The recommendations also propose investments in supporting food access in the city in line with the developing Food Access Plan.

### **11.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 11.4.1 Focus the Food Access Plan purely on immediate need and allocate the full £200k to purchase food. This would support food banks in the short term but would not address any of the systemic issues or underlying causes of food poverty. The approach proposed seeks to strike a balance between addressing underlying causes, building capacity within the current system and ensuring that food banks and food relief projects are able to cope with anticipated increase in demand.
- 11.4.2 Focus the Food Access Plan and resource purely on prevention and addressing the underlying causes of food poverty. There is consensus that prevention should be a priority and that in an ideal world there would be no need for food banks to exist. However, the reality of the current cost of living crisis means this is no short term prospect of eliminating poverty and there is a very real need for emergency food support that cannot be ignored. These proposals mean that we can provide real support to food banks in the short term so that emergency food provision is accessible to those who need it, but where possible can also try to continue to shift away from a dependency model of emergency food provision to one of prevention.
- 11.4.3 Do nothing. The cost of living crisis affects those on the lowest incomes the most as they have the least amount of disposable income. As food is often one of the more flexible items in a household's budget (compared to rent or utility bills for example) this often leads to food poverty and households being unable to purchase sufficient nutritious food for their needs. This has both physical and mental health consequences.

## **12. CAPITAL APPROVALS FOR MONTH 2 2022/23**

12.1 The Finance Manager presented the report which provided details of proposed changes to the existing Capital Programme as brought forward in Month 02 2022/23.

12.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

1. That the committee approve the proposed additions and variations to the Capital Programme listed in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. That the committee approves the council entering into agreements to provide funding to 3rd parties as identified in Appendix 2 of the report; and
3. In connection with the South-West Bus Corridors Scheme, requests the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee to consider the concerns expressed at this meeting in relation to the impact on businesses of introducing 12-hour bus lanes within that Scheme.

12.3 **Reasons for Decision**

12.3.1 The proposed changes to the Capital programme will improve the services to the people of Sheffield.

12.3.2 To formally record changes to the Capital Programme and gain Member approval for changes in line with Financial Regulations and to reset the capital programme in line with latest information.

12.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

12.4.1 A number of alternative courses of action are considered as part of the process undertaken by Officers before decisions are recommended to Members. The recommendations made to Members represent what Officers believe to be the best options available to the Council, in line with Council priorities, given the constraints on funding and the use to which funding is put within the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

**13. CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER RUN LIBRARIES 2022 - 2023**

13.1 The Chair introduced the report and asked if there were any questions. Councillor Richard Williams asked for the word 'urgent' to be added to the distribution matter outlined in recommendation 2, this was agreed.

The purpose of the report is to recommend the continuation of the grant and support package for Associate Libraries for the year April 2022 to March 2023, and continued support for Co-delivered libraries. This is an interim measure pending a strategic review of library services.

This grant was originally going through the interim decision-making process in October/November 2021. However, it was withdrawn at that time so it could be

considered alongside a strategic review of library services. In March 2022 it was clear the strategic review of library services would not happen in the timescale required to ensure the volunteer run libraries continued to be solvent. Therefore, the decision-making process was re-started and now subject to the new committee decision making process.

The funding for this grant and support package being £209k was contained in the Council's March 2022 Budget report. However, an urgent decision is now needed to enable the grants to be issued.

13.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

1. Notes that the funding for the proposed grant payments in this report were included in the Council's budget report in March 2022.
2. Approves the establishment of a fund and the **urgent** distribution of such funds to continue support for Associate libraries until 31st March 2023 and assist their viability and stability by providing a support package up to the value of £209k as set out in the report.
3. Approves the continued support for Associate and Co-delivered libraries by LAIS and other Council services is continued until 31 March 2023, as set out in the report.

13.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 13.3.1 The current arrangements for Associate and Co-delivered libraries expired on 31st March 2022.
- 13.3.2 Continued support will increase the likelihood of all the volunteer run libraries remaining open and vibrant for the year 2022-2023.
- 13.3.3 The Libraries, Archives and Information service is undertaking a Full Service Review, and any implications of this review for Associate and Co[1]delivered libraries will be the subject of future reports and recommendations.
- 13.3.4 Continued support for Associate libraries will give added confidence to trustees and volunteers, at a point they are taking on board lease responsibilities.
- 13.3.5 By supporting the volunteer run libraries to remain on the Library Management System, all SCC library members can access any library in Sheffield using a single, city-wide library card.
- 13.3.6 Continued support will provide a period of financial stability and growth that will attract more volunteers and trustees, and give them additional time to build capacity and develop external funding opportunities.

- 13.3.7 The proposal will ensure the standards and controls relating to the operation of the Council's Library Management System by volunteer libraries are maintained.

#### 13.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 13.4.1 This option provides no funding for the Associate libraries and removes all support packages beyond which can be provided at no cost to Sheffield Library Service or the Council.

Strength of this option:

- This option would save £209k

Weaknesses of this option

- Consultation with the volunteer run libraries shows a slip in their financial sustainability due to the Pandemic, and therefore reliance on fundraising and reserves is unlikely.
- A high probability that a number of libraries would close immediately.
- A high probability of further closures in the subsequent months after library reserves are depleted, unless they find an alternative source of funds.
- Having a grant from the Council provides Trustees and volunteers with a sense of stability and confidence of Council support. Without the grant, the volunteer run libraries may lose volunteers and struggle to recruit.
- As this option would result in some library closures, this would have a negative impact on the health, wellbeing and prosperity of the communities where libraries would close.

- 13.4.2 In this option the Associate libraries would still receive a grant but the support package would be reduced or cut altogether. This means they would not have access to any SCC library book stock and resources, the Library Management System/I.T, and the Peoples' Network (computer access) or any SCC staff support.

Strengths of this options:

- This option would save the Council £62k.
- The financial sustainability of the volunteer libraries would be maintained

Weaknesses of this option:

- The quality of the service would reduce as they would not have access to the city wide book stock and resources, and would need to buy significant amounts of new books to retain a viable library service.
- Without guidance and support from SCC staff, the quality of the library offer is likely to reduce – i.e. reduced access to training, governance support, ensuring compliance with data protection, equalities.

- 13.4.3 This option would be to continue with the grant and the support package, but

with a ten percent reduction on the grant.

Strengths of this option:

- This option would save the Council £13,570.

Weaknesses of this option:

- A ten percent reduction in grant, plus the weak financial position of the libraries due to the Pandemic, plus rising energy costs, could mean some libraries can no longer cover their basic running costs.

## **14. HOUSING SUPPORT FUND**

14.1 The Director of Housing Services presented the report to update the Committee of the latest and future allocation of funding received from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) known as the Household Support Fund (HSF).

The purpose of the report was to seek approval from the Strategy and Resources Committee to spend the Housing Support Funding from DWP in line with the spending plan detailed in this report and, following the same spending priorities that have been previously undertaken through Housing Support funding.

The report also informed the Committee of a new requirement, to deliver at least one third of the fund to households, to pension age individuals.

14.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

1. Approves delivery of a programme of support funded from the Household Support Funding for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 in line with the report from the allocations totalling £5.204m from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
2. Subject to the Department of Work and Pensions guidance and grant eligibility of spend remaining the same for the period from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, approves delivery of a programme of support funded from the Household Support Fund for that period in line with the report from the allocations for that period in the same proportions as outlined in the report.

### **14.3 Reasons for Decision**

14.3.1 The recommendations presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee will enable Sheffield City Council to provide the funds to support vulnerable households in the city to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food, energy and water bills, and other related essentials through the cost of living crisis.

### **14.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 14.4.1 This report provides a detailed proposal and delivery that officers, in consultation with elected members, believe to be the best way of delivering the Household Support Fund