

# Agenda Item 5

Council Meeting – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Questions Received from Members of the Public, answered by the Relevant Policy Committee Chairs

Name of Questioner	Question	Relevant Policy Committee Chair(s)
Val Wilson	<p>In August I will have been living in my Council house for 50 years, having moved in on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1973. It's not much to ask, but could a plaque be produced and installed at the property to state '50 Years Val's Bungalow', and would the Lord Mayor unveil the plaque.</p> <p><b><i>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here (copy and paste the link into your browser):</i></b></p> <p><a href="#">Sheffield City Council - Agenda for Council on Wednesday 5 July 2023, 2.00 pm</a></p>	Cllr Douglas Johnson, Chair of the Housing Policy Committee
Justin Buxton	<p>1. At the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 10th May to 'Consider the implications of the Street Tree Inquiry on the city, SCC and councillors involved in the decision making at that time.'</p> <p>The following resolution was passed: That the Council 'Believes that for individuals who were council cabinet members in the civic years 2015/16 to 2017/18, resignation from public office would be an appropriate indication of acceptance of responsibility for harms caused.'</p> <p>Please could the Council explain how a councillor could be subsequently appointed to a public office when they were a member of the Cabinet identified in the resolution passed.</p> <p>2. "Do Councillors, and the Labour Councillors in particular, agree with the conclusion drawn in the following statement published by the Labour Police and Crime Commissioner, Alan Billings, commenting on the street tree scandal subject to the Lowcock report:</p> <p>"It was also blown out of all proportion...". Bearing in mind the huge financial and reputational cost incurred by South Yorkshire Police having been persistently misled by the Council?</p>	Cllr Tom Hunt, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee

	<p>Furthermore will the Council publish the apology offered to South Yorkshire Police?</p> <p><b><i>Answers were provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here (copy and paste the link into your browser):</i></b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Sheffield City Council - Agenda for Council on Wednesday 5 July 2023, 2.00 pm</u></a></p>	
<p>Russell Johnson</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (i) Does the new Labour and Council Leader agree with me that any assurances of a new and honest approach to governance have little credibility whilst six former Cabinet Members responsible for the shocking street tree debacle remain as Members?</li> <li>(ii) Does Cllr Hunt understand that ignoring the powerful and clear ECM motion regarding the position of those people further undermines the new regime's legitimacy and claim of integrity?</li> <li>2. (i) In view of the inadequacy of the now notorious apology recently issued, will the Leader publicly request apologies from former Elected Members implicated in the scandal? Will he support the CEx in doing the same regarding former Officers?</li> <li>(ii) Following the national and local press and broadcast coverage of the grovelling apology does the Leadership now understand that length is no substitute for completeness?</li> <li>3. Why is the Council resisting the obvious step of commissioning an independent forensic financial audit of spending decisions (during the Scandal and since) as one step in securing the rehabilitation of this ailing organisation? This would help to demonstrate true remorse and a genuine desire to learn from mistakes rather than conveniently using the welcome though limited Lowcock findings as a screen.</li> <li>4. (i) In view of the excessive Officer and other costs, the waste of Members' valuable time and the questionable origin and functioning of the Local Area Committee (LAC) structure, does the Leader agree that the LACs should be replaced with effective, less expensive mechanisms for involving</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr Tom Hunt, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy &amp; Resources Policy Committee</p>

	<p>a wide range of the citizenry in policy formation and decision-making?</p> <p>(ii) Does the new Leader regret that the behaviours of some of his Councillors have been less than ideal at LAC meetings, clearly not assisting in the much-needed reputational uplift for the Labour Party in this city?</p> <p><b>Answers were provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here (copy and paste the link into your browser):</b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Sheffield City Council - Agenda for Council on Wednesday 5 July 2023, 2.00 pm</u></a></p>	
<p>Ruth Hubbard</p>	<p>1. It is five years ago last week that I had the pleasure and privilege of announcing in a press conference the end of strong leader governance, at the start of what would become the largest ever citizen mobilisation for governance change in the country. As reported to Council, to date the transition has concentrated on “logistical and practical” considerations. This approach was, in my view, deeply misconceived and really should be to this Council’s shame as governance change was wholly delivered by citizens who sought democratised local governance. The transition process and review sought to exclude these considerations. The legally required technical change is a better starting point but has failed to embed democratic value in the constitution, and to deliver against this.</p> <p>At Strategy and Resources Committee I asked you (Council Leader) about these issues and you provided quite a long answer, a bit (or some) of which I agreed with. But essentially the ‘solution’ you suggested is public engagement and involvement which you state is a priority over the next year.</p> <p>A priority of public engagement doesn’t really have very much to do with what I mean by democratising local governance and embedding or delivering democratic value. It doesn’t really relate to the core citizens agenda on governance change collated from 20k citizen conversations that I was charged with representing and following through on after the referendum on behalf of <i>It’s Our City!</i></p>	<p>Cllr Tom Hunt, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy &amp; Resources Policy Committee</p>

	<p>I see there have been significant changes to the membership of the Governance Committee. Who can I talk to about the issues of democratising local governance and the kinds of things this actually means, including for the constitution?</p> <p>2. At Strategy and Resources Committee I also told you groups of citizens and stakeholders are having informal discussions considering setting up a Sheffield, citizen-led oversight and scrutiny (SOS) group or network. I asked you what encouragement or support you might want to offer to an independent scrutiny and oversight initiative. You responded by saying you “want to ensure all residents get the input into the decisions that affect them across all council services, doing that will be a systematic process which we cannot cut short by endorsing any one group.”</p> <p>I think you’ve misunderstood – this is about independent citizen-led scrutiny and oversight and obviously citizens and stakeholders can self-organise and take independent and collective action as they wish. I was certainly not seeking some kind of council permission or “endorsement”. In fact it’s probably the other way round isn’t it - it is for citizens to ‘endorse’ and approve of, or not, what the Council is doing. This does seem quite a fundamental misunderstanding.</p> <p>One of the main cultural – and democratic – challenges to this Council is not about the Council responding to what it itself owns, controls, defines, organises, manages (in its own statist, municipal project). That would just be silly (if the Council only sought to be positive about what it itself was doing and putting in place, a bit like marking your own homework). The cultural and democratic challenge is in many ways quite the opposite. It is to respond differently to people organising outside the Council, independently, and who offer alternative viewpoints and agendas, expertise, and critique of what the Council is doing. In fact it should also protect and promote independent voices and self-organisation (including, for example, promoting the importance of the independence of the VCS in a local democracy).</p> <p>To not understand that one big cultural and democratic challenge to respond differently to things that the Council is not in charge of, is to have not read Lowcock and understand how this Council created political enemies of tree campaigners, treated them with hostility,</p>	<p>Cllr Tom Hunt, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy &amp; Resources Policy Committee</p>
--	--	--

	<p>misrepresented and persecuted them and sought to crush them. <i>It's Our City!</i> also experienced hostility from the political leadership of this Council and certainly this is also in the experience of many community groups (though they must speak for themselves).</p> <p>Is the Council going to continue to treat with hostility those who offer independent and alternative viewpoints, experience, knowledge, expertise, and scrutiny and challenge? What is it going to do differently from what it has done in the past to promote and protect (and make visible) independent and pluralist voices for our local democracy?</p> <p>3. My last question is about public questions. In a way, it highlights a clear example of the failure to take seriously, and to deliver, democratic value in basic constitutional arrangements and delivery that I have been talking about.</p> <p>Since COVID – and then through the governance transition itself - the Council has gradually introduced more restrictions and hoops to jump through in order to ask and get public questions and responses on record. But who on earth can give up half a day – from work, children and caring responsibilities, pay money to get into town and so on, to even think about the possibility of being here in person to ask a question? Recently the people contacting me have been disabled people – they simply cannot get here so can never get a public question on record, they are simply prevented and not given access to even this most minimal of democratic rights.</p> <p>Yet all I see, again and again in Council reports, is that “citizens are at the heart of everything we do”.</p> <p>Does no one in the Council notice these things – including obvious direct and indirect discrimination - or is it a deliberate strategy to prevent access, to discriminate and silence, and reduce or prevent the exercise of citizens democratic rights?</p> <p>Public questions is an extremely thin little right, a small thing, but they are currently the only thing in the constitution that allows for direct citizen voice and getting something on public record.</p> <p>I raised a myriad of issues to do with public questions in a question to the Governance Committee last October, including the discriminatory lack of access and also inconsistencies in practice, difficulties with responses and</p>	<p>Cllr Fran Belbin, Deputy Leader of the Council &amp; Chair of the Governance Committee</p>
--	---	---

	<p>so on (and some of the same issues are also arising in LACs). I have also talked separately to officers about this issue. To be fair the Governance Committee has agreed they want to look at this. But this is glacial. Is it not the job of public servants to act with urgency when obvious issues of discrimination and exclusion are involved? They appear to be barely, if at all, noticed, even when raised. But still all I see is that citizens are at the heart of everything we do.</p> <p>I contrast this with the recent experience of asking a question at the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Board. They were surprised that I even thought I had to clear space and make my way down to attend in person. They were more than happy – in fact they fully expected – to read my questions out for a response on the day.</p> <p>Can I please ask for immediate action – starting today – to ensure that at the very least, reasonable adjustments are in place so that people who simply cannot get to Council meetings are not prevented from exercising their democratic right to ask a public question. It needs officers or councillors to be willing to read out questions submitted.</p> <p><b><i>Answers were provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here (copy and paste the link into your browser):</i></b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Sheffield City Council - Agenda for Council on Wednesday 5 July 2023, 2.00 pm</u></a></p>	
<p>Sam Gregory <i>(not present at the meeting to ask his question, but it was asked on his behalf by another member of public)</i></p>	<p>Urban Splash have announced plans to pave over a section of the garden at Park Hill to build new surface car parks. In the middle of a climate emergency, and in the face of enormous opposition from residents, are the council prepared to let this company destroy well-used green space in one of the most deprived areas of Sheffield?</p> <p><b><i>An answer was provided at the meeting and the webcast and minutes (when published) can be found here (copy and paste the link into your browser):</i></b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Sheffield City Council - Agenda for Council on Wednesday 5 July 2023, 2.00 pm</u></a></p>	<p>Cllr Ben Miskell, Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee</p>

<p>Julie Pearn (<i>not present at the meeting to ask her question</i>)</p>	<p>On 27<sup>th</sup> April a very positive on-line meeting took place between representatives of Sheffield including the Lord and Deputy Lord Mayors and then Leader of the Council, and representatives of Nablus including the Deputy Mayor, to discuss Nablus' invitation to twin, made in April 2019. Would either the Lord Mayor or Leader of the Council please update us on progress since then and provide a timeline for next steps?</p> <p>Answer - We are establishing a framework for how all future International Relations arrangements are conducted. A paper on this is going to a future Governance Committee meeting on July 20th and we will be able to update you further after that meeting.</p>	<p>Cllr Tom Hunt Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy &amp; Resources Policy Committee</p>
<p>Michael Mullin (<i>not present at the meeting to ask his questions</i>)</p>	<p><u>Questions Regarding Non-Ionising Radiation Risks</u></p> <p>1) <a href="https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/b27154/Answers%20to%20Public%20Questions%20Monday%2020-Feb-2023%2014.00%20Council.pdf?T=9">https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/b27154/Answers%20to%20Public%20Questions%20Monday%2020-Feb-2023%2014.00%20Council.pdf?T=9</a> At the full council meeting on 20/02/23 I referred to the international certificate for non-ionizing radiation (ICNIRP) for which Sheffield City Council have signed and acknowledged. I explained at the last meeting that this certificate is what the authorities are using to determine if the public are safe from non-ionizing radiation. As a reminder your guidelines state on page 546:</p> <p><b><i>“Different groups in a population may have differences in their ability to tolerate a particular non-ionizing radiation exposure. For example, children, the elderly, and some chronically ill people might have a lower tolerance for one or more forms of non-ionizing radiation exposure than the rest of the population. Under such circumstances, it may be useful or necessary to develop separate guideline levels for different groups within the general population, but it may be more effective to adjust the guidelines for the general population to include such groups”</i></b></p> <p>Thus, Sheffield City Council should consider to “adjust” the “general guidelines” to accommodate vulnerable groups in the city. They haven’t done this.</p> <p>Anyone who goes back and reads my original question in the meeting on the 20/02/23 will see that the 1<sup>st</sup> question I raised has not been clearly answered so I will elaborate further...</p>	<p>Cllr Ben Miskell, Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee</p>

Irrespective whether or not this council is boldly claiming they can't use other international guidelines, which do accommodate these groups, the guidelines you are currently using clearly suggest that once granting planning permission for a mobile phone tower to be placed in a certain area, if none of you choose to act any further, you will potentially be at risk of causing a significant minority of the people in our society to get ill attributed by the increase in non-ionizing radiation to the environment. Do you accept this? Yes or No.

- 2) In response to this recommendation, rather than directly answering my question Sheffield City Council have typically changed the dynamic of the question by saying:

***“Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure”...***

***...“Therefore, where an applicant certifies that proposals have been designed to comply with the guidelines published by ICNIRP, health impacts cannot be considered as part of the decision-making process”...***

As you can see this is not answering my question. Please be aware the points raised by Sheffield City Council have been refuted by the ICNIRP above. For further confirmation that what the council have said is incorrect then please read the next page (547) in the ICNIRP certificate for which I kindly provided the link for in the public meeting on the 20/02/23. See also here.

<http://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPphilosophy.pdf>. It states:

***....In practice, the critical steps in applying these general procedures may differ across the non-ionizing radiation spectrum. Several steps in these procedures require scientific judgement, e.g., on reviewing the scientific literature and determining appropriate reduction factors”***



To explain further why this is correct, if you are decision maker e.g. a local council, you are required to read current scientific literature to validate your decision. If you read scientific literature, you are supposed to carefully document what you have read, and the public are then entitled to ask what exactly did you read, and did you read this particular paragraph.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for which Sheffield City Council have copied and pasted in response to my original question raised on the 20/02/23 is not a scientific paper. In truth, the ICNIRP document is not a scientific paper either, but your council have long ago admitted that your argument on public health primarily revolves around the ICNIRP document.

Fortunately, at the last meeting on the 20/02/23, as well as here, I am sensibly referring to this document directly, and reading its advice, whilst you are choosing to refer to others who are basing their very same conclusions to the document I am referring you to.

- a) Do you accept that you are ignoring critical advice from the ICNIRP above?
- b) Have you fully documented and consulted with everyone within at least 500m of the area and made a record of their age, medical records etc, before you had put the mobile phone transmitter up in these areas? (*Note if you didn't do this you certainly have complied with the ICNIRP certificate*).
- c) Do you agree like your guidelines suggest you also have a responsibility to measure the safety levels and make the necessary adjustments in certain areas?

3) As I clearly explained at the last full council meeting the guidelines you are relying on are a "general guideline" for the public. The ICNIRP even tell you they won't necessarily cover the entire population's health and are only considering the "heating of tissue". Nowhere in the ICNIRP guidelines does it state they are safe. The rather arbitrary conclusion that there should be "no consequences for public health" is usually a statement added by "fact checkers". The actual ICNIRP document acknowledges the condition of "electrosensitivity".

- a) Does Sheffield City Council acknowledge the condition of "electrosensitivity"?

b) If the answer is yes (like your guidelines have said) are you going to act on their advice and put in place appropriate measures to protect these individuals (and others) rather than continually claiming to the public you can't do this (*which in fact means you do not want to do this as can be proven in the next question*)?

4) *[Question 4 was not accepted by the Lord Mayor]*

**Answers to Qs 1 to 3** - The base content to all of the answers to the questions can be found at the UKHSA webpage. UKHSA's advice available through the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/electromagnetic-fields>

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) advises the UK Government on the public health aspects of exposure to Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs), including those from radio frequency (RF) sources, such as mobile phone base stations and other radio transmitters in the environment; of which the 5th Generation (5G) of mobile telecommunications technology will be one of them. UKHSA provides public health advice on limiting exposures to EMFs based on the published scientific evidence, but does not have any regulatory powers on planning aspects of mobile sites. Although 5G technology brings new services and reflects the latest evolution in mobile communications technology, it does that through the use of radio waves which are not new and have been transmitted into the environment for a range of purposes over many years.

**Answers to Questions 1 & 2**

Advice for Q1 & Q2. UKHSA's main advice on EMFs is that they should comply with the exposure guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), in which case there should be no consequences for public health. The ICNIRP guidelines apply for the whole population, including children, and people of varying health status, which may include particularly susceptible groups or individuals; and take into account studies involving possible health effects from long term exposure. Independent expert groups in the UK and at international level have examined the accumulated body of research evidence. Their conclusions support the view that health

effects are unlikely to occur if exposures are below international guideline levels.

The World Health Organization (WHO) warns against adopting additional arbitrary reductions on the ICNIRP levels as such measures are not based in science and may undermine public confidence.

The following UKHSA webpage provides health-related information about exposure to radio waves from 5G communications networks: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health>

Further information about UKHSA's guidance regarding RF exposure from mobile phone base stations can be found through the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health>

The exposure levels encountered in publicly accessible areas around masts are required to comply with the exposure guidelines published by ICNIRP. The mobile phone network operators certify that installations are compliant, when submitting planning applications to local authorities. The mobile phone network operators are committed to ensuring this through the following Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1057999/Code\\_of\\_practice\\_for\\_wireless\\_network\\_development\\_in\\_England.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1057999/Code_of_practice_for_wireless_network_development_in_England.pdf)

Further useful advice from ICNIRP's own FAQ <https://www.icnirp.org/en/rf-faq/index.html>

In terms of the specifics,

- a) the Director of Public Health doesn't accept he is ignoring critical advice from ICNIRP. The advice from UKHSA is clear. See the second paragraph in the above.
- b) The local authority doesn't have access to medical records
- c) The Director of Public Health doesn't agree with Mr Mullin on this. Those who install masts have a responsibility to ensure exposure levels are below guidelines. The planning team have previously responded to a detailed question on this.

**Answer to Question 3**

UKHSA publishes comprehensive reviews of the scientific evidence relevant to radio wave exposures and health from time to time. One such review, backed by one of UKHSA's predecessor organisations, the Health Protection Agency (HPA), was undertaken by its own independent expert Advisory Group on Non-ionising

Radiation (AGNIR) and published at the end of April 2012. The report is available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/radiofrequency-electromagnetic-fields-health-effects>

The AGNIR report has carefully assessed whether certain people are especially sensitive to exposures to RF fields, leading to unpleasant symptoms which affect their health. Many studies have now been carried out, reflecting the importance ascribed to understanding the condition and making appropriate help available to sufferers. AGNIR concluded there is increasing evidence that RF fields below guideline levels do not cause symptoms and cannot be detected by people, even those who consider themselves sensitive to RF fields. UKHSA agrees with AGNIR that this does not undermine the importance of the symptoms that are experienced, but it does suggest causes other than those directly related to RF fields should be considered.

The HPA published a review of the public health aspects of electrical sensitivity (EHS) in 2005 and this included comments on the management of affected individuals and evaluation of treatment options. The report is available at:  
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140722091854/http://www.hpa.org.uk/Publications/Radiation/HPARDSeriesReports/HpaRpd010/>

In terms of a practical way forward, the WHO advises in its background document on EHS that treatment of affected individuals should focus on the health symptoms and the clinical picture, and not on the person's perceived need for reducing or eliminating EMF in the workplace or home. EHS has no clear diagnostic criteria and there is no scientific basis to link EHS symptoms to EMF exposure. Further, EHS is not a medical diagnosis, nor is it clear that it represents a single medical problem. For more information on WHO's advice please follow the link below:

<https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/radiation-and-health/non-ionizing/electromagnetic-hypersensitivity>

UKHSA continues to monitor the evidence applicable to 5G and other radio technologies and will update its advice as necessary.

Thus, having considered what WHO and others have said, it isn't for the DPH or the council to make any recognition of a medical condition or not.

There seem to be no real diagnostic criteria at all, and no clear scientific basis linking electro sensitivity to exposure to non ionising radiation or similar.

Thank you again, for submitting your questions.

	<p><u>Questions Regarding the Street Trees Inquiry</u></p> <p>1) In response to Tree inquiry report by Mark Lowcock the Sheffield star reported:</p> <p><b><i>“Despite the damning findings, no current councillor or officer is expected to face any formal consequences over what happened while chief executive Kate Josephs says no disciplinary action is planned against any existing employee – partly because many of those responsible for policy decisions at the time have already left”.</i></b></p> <p>In response to this statement, imagine you’re an ordinary member of the public who has committed a criminal offence. Your offence is you have arranged (strategically) a group of people who are working for you and your vested interests to kill thousands of perfectly healthy trees. Does Sheffield City Council genuinely believe South Yorkshire police wouldn’t now go to this person’s house and arrest them, simply because they were told they had stopped working for a particular organization or had left the city and found a new job?</p> <p><b>Answer to Q1:</b> While paragraph 985 of the Inquiry report says that “The Inquiry did not find that the Council had exceeded the use of its authority (nor that there had been criminal conduct, contempt of court, or breach of professional standards)”, we have ensured that the Inquiry report has been shared widely, including with the police and our auditors. Should any organisation wish to take further steps we will work with them to do so.</p> <p>2) Your council has recently said you will financially compensate all the tree protestors who were arrested. However, this is coming out of your council budget, so it’s the public who are funding your actions, not you. Does Sheffield City Council not think this money should really be deducted from the bank accounts of certain council employee’s such as the former leaders of the council/chief executive, all cabinet members (who oversaw this incident), and all the known council officers who participated in lying that healthy trees were diseased.</p>	<p>Cllr Tom Hunt, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy &amp; Resources Policy Committee</p>
--	---	--

**Answer to Q2:** The Council has not opened a compensation scheme. We are working with the handful of people who were found in breach of the injunctions to maximise what can be done to mitigate any ongoing impact on them.

The Council has a clear standards, disciplinary and complaints procedures. These are confidential processes.

- 3) Sheffield City Council previously claimed many of our healthy trees had to be killed as their roots were inhibiting the possibility to resurface the road. However decades prior to this event, the very same roads were resurfaced multiple times, and the same trees (somehow) remained standing. Can Sheffield City Council fully explain to all the people of Sheffield how the civilized (and clearly far more honest) people of the past managed to achieve this feat?

**Answer to Q3:** The Inquiry report addressed these matters and set out the full account of what happened in relation to the decision making in the design and implementation of the original tree replacement programme of the Streets Ahead contract. You can read the Inquiry's full report on our website: [Sheffield Street Trees Inquiry](#)

- 4) Whilst your council have killed thousands of trees you have also attempted to kill many more. For example, why did you propose a planning application to kill the trees on Oxford Street when they were originally planted there in remembrance of the 1<sup>st</sup> world war? (*Parts of this quiet road on Oxford Street was historically cobbled so it couldn't possibly have been proposed for resurfacing a road as it was an historic sight. Therefore, why did your council propose to kill them?*)

**Answer to Q4:** The Council has not submitted any planning applications relating to Oxford Street. Application reference 19/02460/FULTEL made on behalf of EE / H3G was approved but no consent was given for tree removal or replacement as part of this. In fact the flanking of the nearby trees was given as a rationale for approval of the application.

- 5) YES OR NO... can you confirm whether the following statement which has been summarized by the Sheffield star is true:

***At the height of the dispute, Sheffield Council bosses considered poisoning healthy trees in a desperate attempt to ‘defeat’ the protesters”.***

**Answer to Q5:** As set out in the Inquiry report, the Council considered, and swiftly rejected, ring-barking trees due for replacement. This was considered but never enacted.

- 6) YES OR NO can you confirm whether the following statement summarized by the Sheffield star is true: ***“there was a target to cut down 17,500 trees – half the city’s street trees – and replace them with saplings as part of highways improvement work. This has previously been denied for years by the council but has now been accepted”.***

**Answer to Q6:** As we set out in our apology on 20 June 2023, we are sorry for repeatedly saying in the media, and in correspondence, that there was no target for the tree replacement programme and for developing and adopting a flawed plan and including the aim to replace half of the city’s street trees.

[https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/an\\_open\\_apology\\_for\\_the\\_behaviour\\_of\\_sheffield\\_city\\_council\\_during\\_the\\_street\\_trees\\_dispute.pdf](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/an_open_apology_for_the_behaviour_of_sheffield_city_council_during_the_street_trees_dispute.pdf)

- 7) Most of the trees have been killed by Sheffield City Council between 2012-2018, but I will now refer to examples of trees being killed in the last 12 months. Consider the tree outside Marks and Spencer on Sheffield high street.
- a) Why has it been killed under a Green coalition if you have declared a climate emergency?
  - b) Which council officers made the decision to kill it?
  - c) Why have you killed it when the upcoming development plan for the high street according to the press has been postponed i.e. couldn’t you have just waited until this development plan was definitely going ahead before killing it?
  - d) Why wasn’t it possibly for your architects to work around the problem and who are they?
- Please note if you attempt to say it was diseased I request to see the report that clearly states this tree was diseased from your mysterious tree specialist (which of course don’t exist).

e) YES OR NO can your council officers try to understand that even if you had correctly stated the tree was diseased, do you accept that trees aren't stupid living creatures (like your actions have perceived them to be) and are extremely capable to fully recover themselves as they've done many times in the past (just like you) but long before your officers were born?

**Answer to Q7:** Details of the changes to Fargate were set out to Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee on 8 February 2023, you can read the full papers here: [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee, 08/02/2023 14:00 \(sheffield.gov.uk\)](#) and here: [Sheffield City Council - Agenda for Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee on Wednesday 8 February 2023, 2.00 pm.](#)

As these papers set out at paragraph 6.5, there was consultation and engagement around the plans for these trees. This process included demonstrating the uplift in Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) with the replacement trees. The case also considered the environmental benefits of introducing sustainable urban drainage and the extensive planting proposed.

8) Consider the large tree that has been cut down in the last 12 months on Hanover Way (duel carriage) next to the King's Court building.

a) What is your excuse for why this tree was killed?  
*Yet again if it was diseased I request to see the report by the tree specialist (which like I said earlier doesn't exist).*

b) Does Sheffield City Council think that all the public are so unobservant to not think that one of the reasons why this tree might have been killed may be due to a planning application you have since granted for a mobile phone tower to be placed yards away from where it was? Can you confirm if it had anything to do with this? Yes or no.

**Answer to Q8:** This area between Headford Street and the Kings Court building is not part of the adopted public highway. It is also outside of a conservation area. As such the landowner can manage their trees in any way they see fit in this area without the need for planning permission or council consent. Unfortunately,



we do not hold any information as to the rationale for this tree being removed.

9)

- a) Why did Sheffield City Council not tell the truth on how much money they would lose from their contract if you didn't cut down the trees i.e. why did you exaggerate?

**Answer to Q9a:** As we set out in our apology on 20 June 2023, we are sorry for repeatedly saying in the media, and in correspondence, that any change to the tree replacement programme would result in catastrophic costs. The Inquiry report sets out the full account of what happened in relation to the decision making and messaging on this issue and can be found on our website at the link above. You can read the full apology here.

[https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/an\\_open\\_apology\\_for\\_the\\_behaviour\\_of\\_sheffield\\_city\\_council\\_during\\_the\\_street\\_trees\\_dispute.pdf](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/an_open_apology_for_the_behaviour_of_sheffield_city_council_during_the_street_trees_dispute.pdf)

- b) YES OR NO does Sheffield City Council agree with my analysis.

Unlike previous technologies like 3G and 4G, 5<sup>th</sup> generation technology uses millimetre waves which are unable to travel as far (or pass as easily) through physical objects like buildings and trees especially when they are wet. These limitations with 5G communications mean in order to send signals for longer distances, 5G requires a staggering number of small transmitters at close intervals down every street.

**Answer to Q9b:** We consulted with the UK Health Security Agency on your question. They said that 5G communication use is proposed in a range of frequency bands, split into two ranges (FR1 and FR2):

- The FR1 band covers frequencies from 410 megahertz (MHz) to 7.125 gigahertz (GHz).
- The FR2 band covers frequencies from 24.25 GHz to 52.6 GHz. (termed millimetre waves). Their use is not new, they have been used for point-to-point microwave links and some

other types of transmitters that have been present in the environment for many years.

Due to attenuation of signals, the higher the frequency the shorter its range, i.e. that 700 MHz signals have superior propagation and range to 24.4 GHz signals.

The UK network operators have presently licenced use in the FR1 band for 5G in 700 MHz and 3.5 GHz, along with some reuse of their frequencies in the old 3G/4G bands of 2.1 GHz. Likewise, this is not new, they have been used for many years. But at this time as far as UKHSA are aware, there is no widespread rollout of FR2 frequencies in the UK.

c) Is the real reason why you have installed three 5G towers (including a massive one) in one small space above Oxford Street (Boating lake/Ponderosa) is because your council didn't get your own way in cutting down all the trees on Oxford Street like you originally intended, even though the trees were planted in remembrance of the 1<sup>st</sup> world war?

**Answer to Q9c:** No, there is no link between the decision to install 5G masts and any tree replacement programme in the Streets Ahead contract.

10) I will now refer to 4 trees being cut down within the Hanover estate in the last 12 months.

- a) *[Question 10a was not accepted by the Lord Mayor]*
- b) Why did you cut down a very mature tree next to Hanover estate swings? *(Note it was due to the Greens originally going to use that space for the recycling but the council changed their mind)* Can your council confirm...

**Answer to Q10b:** This relates to the play area on Exeter Drive, where the land is managed by Housing and Neighbourhood Services. The Service wanted to open up the seating area for residents, it was agreed that the 3 Sycamore trees were to be felled and the mature Maple retained but dead wooded. Prices for the work were obtained by Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and consultation with the TARA has taken place. The Council's agreed processes for seeking expert tree

advice prior to any removal was sought. The 3 trees have been felled but stumps still left to grind.

11) Does Sheffield City Council accept that this whole silly fiasco has shown that like my local MP Paul Blomfield said with no shame in his Big Conversation in 2018:

***“Sheffield City Council contracts are more important than trees.”***

**Answer to Q11:** I have been clear that the street tree dispute did incredible damage to the council’s reputation and badly affected many of the residents involved. It is also clear that the council must accept full responsibility.

These healthy trees were important to residents and gave communities and the city benefits which were overlooked. Residents should not have had to fight their council to retain and value healthy trees, particularly not those with special significance such as memorial, rare or veteran trees. We recognise that we got so much of this wrong and we apologise unreservedly.

I have attached the full open apology to all residents of Sheffield, and beyond, for Sheffield City Council’s actions during the street trees dispute – which was authored by myself and Chief Executive Kate Josephs.

Thank you again, for submitting your questions.

*Questions Regarding “Undemocratic”*

*[All questions (1a to d & 2) were not accepted by the Lord Mayor]*

*(NB. Several questions received from Mr. Mullin were not accepted by the Lord Mayor. The questions which were ruled out of order by the Lord Mayor and the reasons for his ruling are as follows:-*

*Non-Ionising Radiation Risks - Question 4 – was not accepted on the grounds that it related to a named officer of the Council. Although the question does not identify the officer by name and uses his job title instead, as the only officer with that job title, it is clear to whom the questioner is referring.*

	<p><i>Street Trees Inquiry – Question 10a – was not accepted on the grounds that it related to a matter not being within the responsibility of the City Council.</i></p> <p><i>“Undemocratic” - Questions 1a, b, c &amp; d were not accepted on the grounds that they related to matters not being within the responsibility of the City Council.</i></p> <p><i>“Undemocratic” – Question 2 was not accepted both on the grounds that it related to named Members of the Council and because it related to matters not being within the responsibility of the City Council.)</i></p>	
--	--	--